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ORLANDO, FLORIDA.

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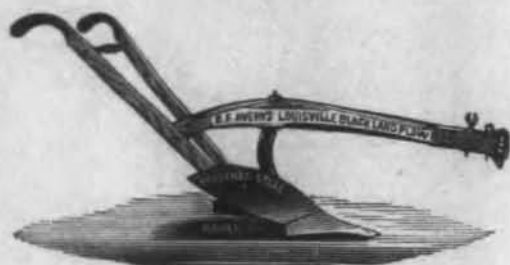
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# LIVING IN FLORIDA.

BY  
MRS. LEORA B. ROBINSON.  
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Price, 25 Cents.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE letters in this little pamphlet were originally written for "Home and Farm," and have appeared in that journal substantially as they are here published.

I find, on revising them, that a few changes have been made necessary on account of the wonderful rapidity with which Orange county has been settled and improved, and especially by the bewildering transformation which has taken place in the town of Orlando itself. From the time the first of this series of letters was written to the date of the last, a period of a year and a half intervenes, and Orlando in that time has grown from a little, rude village of two or three hundred inhabitants to one of fifteen hundred, and the whole surrounding county has been developing with corresponding rapidity. With this development "Living in Florida" has, of course, greatly changed. I have endeavored to remove or reconcile all apparent inconsistencies, but if the critical reader should find still any discrepancies between statements made in the earlier letters and those in the last, I trust the explanation given will be sufficient.

If the letters have any value, it consists in the fact that I have endeavored to give a strictly truthful and impartial account of Florida as it appeared to me at the time.

LEORA B. ROBINSON.

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HORE.

## Living in Florida.

### LETTER I.

#### ACTUAL LIFE IN THE LAND OF FLOWERS—THE HOUSES AND THOSE WHO LIVE IN THEM—IMMI- GRANTS CROWDING IN.

SO much has been told of this land of the golden trees that it would seem that not another word could be said, descriptive or eulogistic or even in regard to the fascinating, practical possibilities of the country.

But the avalanche of letters that comes down upon any settler here indiscreet enough to make known his address, shows that the interest is quickening and growing, and that nothing but iteration and reiteration concerning this promising land will content those looking for a better climate or better fortune.

Florida has so much of its own that is delightful and good, that I can see no reason for the most infatuated residents being tempted to exaggerate its merits or withhold its demerits from strangers seeking information. And yet the general impression given abroad of this country is one of unalloyed attractiveness, while the drawbacks are so lightly spoken of that every one comes here with expectations far beyond the reality. As a little boy told me, whose opinion I asked of this, his new home, "It's fairy-land to read about, but when you come to see it it's not so fairy."

The shock on beholding for yourself a new Florida town is something that perhaps no preparatory warning could guard against. In the midst of a pine wood clearing, with a circle of ragged pines skirting the horizon, the stumps of trees still to be seen here and there through the town, and, in places, even the trees themselves lying as they fell—behold a collection, large or small, of unplanned, unpainted, upright board shanties, set up oftenest on stumps of the fallen pines, sometimes on more symmetrically hewn logs, and sometimes on low pillars of such brick as the country affords.

Underneath the houses may generally be seen the old pine stumps left when the forest trees were cut down, as well as the

debris resulting from building, with whatever other trash time may have accumulated, and, amongst it all, hogs and chickens coming and going at will; for, while here and there may be found a house framed and weather-boarded after the usual fashion, with inclosures filled with trees and shrubbery, for the most part the yards or lots surrounding the houses are without fences, and there is nothing to keep out beastly intruders.

Hogs and cattle have the "freedom of the city," so the slender Florida hogs, which, some one has observed, are only fit to stand on end and crack like a nut, make themselves at home regardless of fitful law, and rub their sides at the front door in the daytime, or lie under the house and snore at night.

The streets of the town are of an ashen-grey sand. There are no sidewalks—only an unbroken continuation of the same yielding grey sand up to the very doors.

The yards, fenced and unfenced, are still of sand. Sand everywhere! Your feet sink down into it as you walk. It would not be more troublesome to walk on feather-beds. Your horse plows through it when you ride. You breathe sand; you eat sand. It blows into your house, heaps itself in the flower-garden where you don't want it and drifts away from where you do. It is dirty; it is gritty; it is altogether without apology or redeeming quality, except the one queer property it has of somehow holding an orange-tree just right, and supplying it with something that just suits it while it grows and grows to the perfect fruit. This is the secret of its charm.

A Louisville lady who was called on to admire our wonderful roses, said, "Yes, the roses are fine; but who could think roses pretty growing out of an ash-heap?"

A gentleman who came here from Chicago last winter for health, said, "I do believe if the people could know just how this sand looks it would scare them." It scared him; for he left Florida the second day, and he ran so fast and so far I think the sight of our sand hills will never offend his eyes again.

But grass does grow here. Through the woods there is a beautiful, unbroken carpet of wire-grass, and on roadsides where travel has not worn the ground bare, there is a combination of native grasses, forming a pleasant relief for the eye and good turf for the feet. With some care in starting, Bermuda grass will grow and remain green all summer. In the yard of the court-house in Orlando, Bermuda grass survives in spite of the trampling of many feet; and in the yards of two dwellings in the town, I have seen the same grass growing luxuriantly, even escaping from underneath the fences and forming in the street a sidewalk of turf, very grateful to weary toilers through the sandy streets.

The inside of the houses is no better than the outside promises. There are a few tolerably well finished and plastered frame houses. Some of them are ceiled inside, but most of them are mere shells—



windows and doors with just enough timber to hold them together, the whole anatomy of the structure left bare, with many a crack and draft.

There is seldom any provision made for fire except in the kitchen, and the natives frequently dispense with that, and do their cooking out-of-doors in an iron pot. Sometimes may be found an open fireplace or two in a dwelling, but generally in houses which indulge in fires in cold weather there is only a flue for a stove-pipe. Even the hotels in Orlando last winter, 1880-81, made no provision for fires in the rooms of the guests, and strangers were subjected to the greatest discomfort, and some were obliged to leave the place on this account, for the winter was cold, and there were many days, even in the spring, when a fire was needed.

In such habitations are the people camping, waiting for better things. The promise of better things appears in the glossy, dark green of the orange groves visible here and there through the woods, across the lakes, and in the borders of the town. And that such camping and waiting have their attractions may be judged from the crowds of the enchanted who are pressing in to share the life of the people that live in these houses.

Hotels and boarding-houses are kept full, while there is scarcely a household so crowded that is not implored to make room for the stranger, or a cabin so mean and small that it does not afford shelter for some boarder seeking health or wealth amidst the pines.

Just in the edge of town is pitched a tent, where a gentleman and his family from Connecticut have begun housekeeping; and it is said that before they fairly got their canvas house in place they had several applications from strangers seeking board.

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## LETTER II.

### THE CLIMATE.

THE leading consideration that brings most people to Florida is the climate. When "zero's gone down to 10°," as our Topsy at home expressed it last winter, it is tempting to think of a land only three day's journey, where the sun is shining, the flowers are blooming, the mocking-birds singing, strawberries reddening, trees budding, and fruit ripening; where the seasons are only three; where spring, summer, and fall join hands and shut winter out of the circle of the year.

If the temptation to flee from ice and snow becomes overpowering, and the Northerner wings his way southward to the summer

land, he may reach this place at a time to have all his visions of loveliness realized. But if he chances to migrate in such a "spell of weather" as we had about the 25th ult., when the cold, north-west wind was blowing, the mercury stood at  $41^{\circ}$ , and there was a succession of dark, dreary, drizzling, depressing days, he will think somebody has been mistaken; and if he then turn right about and go off in disgust, no further statement or argument will ever convince him against his own rough experience. But a day or two more of patience will reward him, and convert a probable abuser of our climate into an enthusiastic admirer, for we never have more than a few days of bad weather at a time, and with proper provision for shelter and fire in winter, and proper provision for breeze and shade in the summer, the occasions are rare when there is anything to complain of in the weather.

The climate is the one thing in Florida that has not been and can not be overrated. There is no mistake about it. Still there are some things in regard to it that ought to be better understood by those coming here for health. It is true we have no winter; but at the same time we have cold weather, and there is great lack of precaution against these sudden changes in temperature that are apt to come upon us. These changes are often very sudden, and are keenly felt after the warm weather. Very few houses have fire-places in them, or flues for stoves; and in many of the hotels or large boarding-houses there is no place for a guest to get warm but the kitchen fire, though this matter is being better attended to and two of the largest hotels now have open fire-places or flues for stoves in some of the rooms.

It should be remembered that our weather is but a modification of extremes of northern weather. When it is very cold at the North it is cold here; when it is hot at the North it is hot here, though never so hot or so cold here as there.

No invalid should think of being benefited here without securing in advance a good plastered or ceiled room with an open fire-place. He should be careful to bring flannels, with both light and heavy clothing, a large warm shawl to supply possible deficiencies in bed-clothing, and a good umbrella as protection against the sun.

The breeze is almost constant, and always cool—sometimes too cool—and without some care one is liable to take cold. "What, take cold in Paradise?" exclaimed a new comer.

I have known visitors, who, allured by pictures of our eternal summer, had left flannels and all winter clothing at home, and having only light summer apparel with them, were obliged to supply themselves with suitable clothing in Jacksonville.

Last winter, 1880-81, was said to be cold almost without precedent, and the old settlers say we are not likely to see such weather again for a great many years, but we have already had a touch of cold this winter. To-day it is murky, and so cool that a fire is necessary. Last winter we had a great deal of cold, disagreeable,

rainy, blustering weather. We needed fires almost every evening, sometimes, for a week at a time, constant fires, and could not dispense with them altogether till about the 20th of April. We wore flannels and our usual winter clothing, and slept under blankets and comforts just as we are accustomed to do in Kentucky.

A visitor from St. Louis who called on us, said she had brought her trunk full of summer clothing, but she had not put on any but her flannel traveling dress during her stay.

I kept an account during the winter of 1881, not always of the temperature, but of the general character of the weather, which will probably give a better idea of the truth to a stranger than a mere thermometrical record.

I shall not attempt to transcribe the whole chronicle, but only give dates and descriptions, for the most part, of the bad weather. For the rest you may exhaust the vocabulary of adjectives all akin to the one word "delightful," and you will not find one that will overestimate our climate at its best.

We arrived January 23—Cold rain. Fires necessary.

January 24—Cold rain all day.

January 25—Clearing; sunshine.

February 2—Bad weather.

February 3—Rainy.

February 6—Windy; rain.

February 11—Very warm, 80°. Roses blooming abundantly.

February 12—Turned suddenly cold at night. 48°.

February 13—38° early in the morning. Frost on low ground.

February 14 to 19—Fine. Planted garden seeds. Strawberries daily. 82° M. in the shade; 70° at night.

February 20—Sultry. Rain at night.

February 27—First heavy rain since we came. Thunder storm.

February 28—Discovered multitudes of orange-blossoms on our trees, just six years old from the seed; budded nearly two years. Sudden change, 46° at sunset.

March 3—Found peach-blossoms. Hard rain and blow. Turning cold.

March 4—Wind blowing cold and hard all day. Very disagreeable morning, 48°; night 56°. Picnic in the neighborhood had to be held in-doors.

March 5—Blustering. 59° to 61°.

March 6—Morning cold, 47°. Wind high.

March 8—Rain.

March 21—Wind blowing hard.

March 22—Turned cold; 42° at night. Winds very strong, almost a gale.

March 29—Thunder storm brewing. Rain passed around us. 70° at noon. Wind blowing almost a gale.

March 30—Wind still blowing hard. Eight A.M., 49°. Day bright. Wind very high all day. Temperature from 50° to 60°.

Sprinkle of rain. We could not leave the house to-day, it blew so.

March 31—No rain. 50°. Wind less violent at eight A.M., but still blowing hard and cold. It blows the sand about terribly.

April 1—49°. Wind very high. No rain yet. Turned very cold about dark.

April 2—38° at eight A.M. Wind cold, from north-west.

April 3—Frost last night; almost killed garden; beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and corn all wilted. Day cold and bright.

April 4—Rain enough to wet the top of the sand.

April 8—Pretty good rain; wet the ground one-half inch. 80° M.

April 13—Heavy rain in the night. Still raining.

April 14—Nine A.M., 50°. Cold enough for fire.

April 15—Seven A.M., 48°. Fires. Day bright and pleasant.

April 25—Took down stove in sitting-room.

April 26—Very warm. Mosquitoes are troublesome at night; bars are necessary.

May 14—Very hot; 94° highest point.

May 15—Hot. 94°.

May 16—Pleasant. 90°. Good breeze.

May 17—Very pleasant. 88°. Strong breeze.

This brings us to the beginning of the rainy season and summer weather, about which perhaps less is generally known than of the tourist's time of year.

I shall next endeavor to give you a true idea of the pleasant summer here. I speak from the experience of only one season, but its faithfulness to the general character of summer in this semi-tropical region is attested by all residents.

### LETTER III.

#### SUMMER.

SO strongly is the idea of heat linked with that of the South, that the very words, "a summer in Florida," seem blazing hot; and in spite of all the stories of salt-laden breezes and cooling rains that have beguiled the fancy, the new comer must shrink from the first approach of what he can not help dreading will be a fiery ordeal.

I had heard there were no mosquitoes in this favored locality. I found bars necessary in May, and something that sings like a mosquito, and bites like a mosquito, and that I believe is a mosquito, still gives us an occasional solo through the warm nights of December.



I had heard that snakes, so far from being common, were a rare and coveted sight. I found that one had only to unfasten his enraptured gaze from the all-engrossing orange trees, and walk contemplatively with eyes on the ground, where snakes are wont to be when they are at all, to see plenty of them.

I had heard there was no malaria here. I find that quinine is the specific for many of our ills, and that some fevers have a way of returning every other day.

What wonder, then, that I had doubts about being able to endure, much less to enjoy, the summer weather.

I had heard that the summers were altogether pleasant, that the thermometer never rose far above ninety degrees, that the breeze was almost constant, that the nights were cool. But, nevertheless, it was with apprehension that I saw the weather growing warmer and the summer drawing near; and it was not until May, June, July, August, September went by and still there was no "heated term," that I could believe all danger of the semi-tropical summer was over.

There were only two hot days in the whole summer—that is, when it was uncomfortably hot all day long. Usually, however intense the heat at one or two o'clock—the hours when the heat is greatest—it is not long before relief comes. A breeze from the east, a breeze from the west, and it is pleasant again till next morning.

But those two hot days the breeze failed us, the thermometer stood at ninety-seven degrees, the highest point during the summer. Eight o'clock at night came, and still not a breath from gulf or ocean. The air was hot. The sands still burned with the heat of the scorching day. Out-of-doors it was as hot as within. There was no coolness anywhere.

"This, then," I thought, "is the Florida summer, after all, and in spite of what everybody has told me, we are to have nights when sleep is impossible." But scarcely was the murmur spoken when here it came—the refreshing, salt-laden wind from the sea. One breath was delight.

The reputation of Florida was saved for that night; and during last summer—the summer of 1881—so remarkable for excessive heat elsewhere, the sun never rose on a hot morning, and there was not a night when Floridians, in this part of the peninsula at least, could not lie down and sleep from night till morning unoppressed by heat, and most of the time in an atmosphere of delicious coolness.

I believe I can give you a just description of a hot summer day in South Florida. After a good night's rest when probably a blanket or two was necessary, you wake to find the morning fresh. The sand looks cool, still wet with dew. You are lured out-of-doors by the soft, wooing winds, the cloudless sky, the limpid lakes, and the cool, moist trees. It is a pleasure just to breathe. By eight or nine o'clock you begin to seek the shade—and it is strange how



scant the shade may be that will afford relief from the scorching sun. Even the shade of the trunk of one of the tall pines is sufficient. By nine or ten o'clock the house is the pleasantest place, for the sun is hot, the sand is hot, and if the breeze is going to fail it will begin to think of it about that time, and so will you. You will seek the cool side of the house. You say more than once, "It is warm." You will go frequently to the "monkey jug," where the coolest water hangs, and you will observe that is warm, too. You will look out over the groves and fields and see men working—white men, and most of them Northern men—working without shelter under the blazing sun. This will give you no little astonishment, but it will not make the day any cooler.

When dinner-time comes, two or three o'clock, you will have the table set on the porch, and wish even then that the porch was only a canopy with no sides to it. You will discuss methods of building the new house. Everybody is going to build a new house. You will devise plans wholly with reference to modifying the heat of the sun, and you will talk of adjustable mats, and blinds, and screens, and patent fans; and you will grow still warmer as you go on discussing these things and the hot dinner.

The heat will become almost unendurable, just as it does in the hottest times in Louisville. Then you will hear a sound something like the rumbling of a distant train. The roar will become louder and louder. You will see the tree-tops swaying in the wood. A moment more, the breeze, then the daily rain.

Here it comes, now slanting, now almost through the house, it blows so; and hastily doors and windows must be shut, the table moved in-doors, and dinner probably finished in an atmosphere whose pleasantness is more like the coolness of a bright spring day than summer weather. Such a day may be followed by another and another just like it, or it may be, by a week or more of perfectly pleasant weather when "the air is balm," and every day adds a new joy to existence.

Though a mere record of the weather is generally dull reading, perhaps those really interested in Florida, looking to it as their future home, will not be tired of the subject, and such will be able to get a better idea of the climate from the diary which I kept through that summer:

May 17—Very pleasant. Strong breeze. 88°.

May 22—Showers.

May 23—Cool showers.

May 24—Cool showers.

May 25—Showers; pleasant.

May 26—Showers.

May 28—Pleasant.

May 29—Pleasant.

May 30—Rain; weather fine.

May 31—Cool and pleasant.

- June 1—Showers; pleasant.
- June 2—Rain; pleasant.
- June 3—It rains every day.
- June 4—No rain; breeze delightful.
- June 5—Day very warm.
- June 6—Day very warm.
- June 7—Rain.
- June 8—Rain.
- June 9—A shower.
- June 10—A shower.
- June 11—A shower.
- June 18—Very hot; 94° all day; cool night.
- June 19 to 27—Rain every day.
- June 28—Thunder.
- June 29—Thunder storm in the afternoon; rain after dark.
- June 30—Very warm, but good breeze; 95°.
- July 3—Weather delightful for several days. Rain.
- July 4—Shower.
- July 5—Showers; pleasant.
- July 9—Very hot; 96°, and no breeze.
- July 16—Very warm; sultry till dark. 97° the highest point.
- July 17—Cooler to-day. Good breeze, 91°.
- July 24—93°.
- July 25—92°. Very oppressive. Cooler at night.
- July 26—Showers. Pleasant.
- July 29—Pleasant.
- July 31—Cool weather.
- August 1—Cool weather.
- August 4—Pleasant. Rain.
- August 5—Cool and showery.

This is the last entry till September 12, when I find heavy rains. Very hot and sultry before the rain. Cool after the rain at two P.M.

It all amounts to about this: It rains almost every day. Usually a shower, sometimes several showers, sometimes a hard rain of several hours, and sometimes a rainy day. The sun is always hot. Exposure to its rays means, almost any day, scorching heat. Shade and breeze mean coolness. There is nearly always a breeze, and out-of-doors a bush a little taller than yourself will afford ample shade where you can stop and rest, and as you let the cooling breezes refresh you for a farther walk in the burning sand, you can hardly realize that one step out of the shade will expose you to the scorching sun above, and make you feel as though you were stepping on the burning-hot equator itself.

In the house you must have windows and doors to let in the east and west breezes, or you will think there is no comfort in Florida. But with well-built houses facing east or west, with roomy halls and broad porches—if such things are ever to be in Florida—I can imagine that even the sea-shore would scarcely

afford a more delightful retreat; and I really believe it not impossible that this place may in time become a place of summer resort.

Still, as the weather was a daily surprise to me, and it was only experience that removed my doubts, I can expect no one to realize how pleasant a Florida summer is until he comes and lives through it.

Since the foregoing was written I have passed another summer in Florida, that is to the last of July, and though the weather has been warmer and the rains less frequent, still again the thermometer has not risen above 97°, and this summer we have not had a single hot day, that is, when relief did not come before the setting of the sun. The nights of this summer have been decidedly cooler than the previous one. There seems, indeed, to be no such thing known here as a heated term.

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#### LETTER IV.

##### HOW PESTS AND PRIVATIONS MODIFY HOUSEKEEPING.

HOUSEKEEPING becomes a new problem in Florida, alike to the energetic, self-reliant Yankee and to the most resolute though uninured Southern woman, on account not only of the many conveniences and even necessities of life she must do without, to which she has been accustomed, but also on account of the unfamiliar pests that are always on the alert to vex and annoy.

To begin alphabetically—though I can not promise a whole primer of pests—the ant is the first to be considered. There are several styles of these creatures, varying in size, shape, and proclivities; but only two out of them all give any special trouble; the wood ant and the small red ant. The wood ant, so called, a species of termite, is a soft, whitish variety, rather worm-like in appearance and about a quarter of an inch in length. It makes a business of attacking every bit of wood that comes long in contact with the ground. Beginning under ground, it reduces the wood there almost to powder, and then coming up inside the wood—for it always works in secret and in the dark, and you never catch sight of one unless you dig for it in the ground or in the rotted wood where it is at work—it fairly riddles the interior of every particle of wood it can reach, so that its ravages are often unsuspected till everything is ready to sink into ruins. A post may be sound and fair to look upon outside, but as hollow as a trumpet inside from the base to the top.

Fence posts are expected to rot down. The preliminary charring and coal tarring are gone through with, I suppose, as a mere

matter of form, for it is all in vain. Props and sills of houses are counted on being worm-eaten in about five years, so that they have to be renewed. No one expects them to last longer.

If you set a tub of flowers out-of-doors, the tub at once becomes a prey to the wood ant, and soon all the earth in the tub is full of the crawling things; and often the plants only start, it seems, to furnish material for the ants to destroy. If you drive down stakes to support a vine, the ants find it out. If you try to protect a young brood of chickens from skunks and other numerous and special enemies by enclosing their coops with stakes, before you think of it your defenses are all eaten away and your chickens all eaten up.

But, perhaps, the ravages of the wood ant hurt most when they touch the orange tree. The trees, especially those near any old stumps or chips or stakes, have to be carefully watched; for if the sand or earth is allowed to cover the crown of the roots, the ants will girdle the tree. This is one of the good reasons why, in cultivating orange trees, the earth is drawn away from the trees, and never thrown toward it; and it is also one of the many good reasons why an orange grove can not be left to take care of itself. The only good use I have found for the wood ant is to furnish food for pet mocking-birds; you can not give them a greater delicacy.

In the house the wood ant gives no trouble; his province is undermining the house itself, and he leaves the devastation inside entirely to the small red ant, who goes about her business with exceeding industry.

Sluggards don't have to go to the ant here; the ant saves them that trouble. But they will do well to consider her ways and be wise, for if ever there was a persistent, untiring, and pervading pest, it is our ant. It looks exactly like the little red ant of old acquaintance that used to forage on sugar and syrup occasionally at home; but this ant does not seem to have "a sweet tooth." She likes meat and bread better, though nothing comes amiss to her. You dare not leave anything to eat within her reach, and even a glass of water can not be set down in safety. No one can imagine what a bother it is.

There are two ways of protecting food from them. Barrels of provisions, as soon as brought to the house must be washed on the outside in a strong solution of alum. This must be repeated every three or four months. Safes made of wire netting are either swung from the ceiling by wires, or the legs of the safe must be kept in water. Many persons have metal cups fixed on the wires by which the safes are suspended, but I find that the simplest method, and it is effectual, is to wrap a bit of cotton wool around each wire and wet it occasionally with kerosene or turpentine. This means of protection is also useful for sideboards or other heavy pieces of furniture not easily set in water.

By such means, also, meat may be hung up and kept from the ants. When your roast is brought in from the butcher's let it lie



for an hour or so in the basket, or even hang it on a nail in the coolest place you can find and you will never cook the meat. It will be swarming with ants through and through to the very bone. After one such demonstration you will be likely to put meat at once into the safe, taking precaution to cook it in warm weather, or you will drive long hooks or nails into a beam on the porch where the air circulates freely and there is good shade, and then wrap the hooks or nails a foot or so below where they go into the beam, with cotton wool wet with turpentine. These precautions must be renewed every three or four months. If you forget it, the ants will tell you.

There is some little caution, too, to be observed in cups of water, a method in use by many housekeepers. The water is apt to evaporate speedily, and be out before you know it. If this doesn't happen, the ants get tired waiting for you to forget, and form bridges of their bodies and go over in spite of your vigilance. In this case you have to pour a little coal-oil on top of the water, and they will desist. But thwarted in this direction, they will conspire with the spiders, and you will next find the ants formed in line down a cob-web.

I can't think of a pest we have beginning with the letter "B,"; but this reminds me of our freedom from some annoyances that used to beset us in the north country. I have never seen a beggar in Florida, a book agent, or any sort of agent—not even a sewing-machine agent, a plumber, a peddler, a rag-man, a mad dog, a bit of mud, or an ailanthus tree. We don't hear the pork-house whistles. To be rid of these things is almost compensation for the endurance of some of the ills we have, and for the deprivation of the luxury of gas bills.

[Since I wrote the foregoing statement, agents of all sorts have found us out, and one beggar thought this a good stand for a monopoly of his business; but our commissioners put him in jail, and he was glad to leave the country. I suppose his experience has discouraged the fraternity of beggars, for we have a shabby jail, that is no inducement to criminals or vagrants.]

"C" stands for one of our vilest pests, though "R" for the most part must bear the odium of representing the cock roach. The roaches are large but they begin little, and you may find them of all sizes from about a quarter of an inch in length to two inches. But they are never too little to work ruin, or too old. Any ordinary safe is no hindrance to them. It must be carefully made, with tight-fitting joints, and the doors with double rabbets, so the carpenter I consulted said. I told him I did not know what double rabbets were, but I wanted double rabbets if roaches were afraid of them. Whereupon he kindly explained to me that he did not mean twin hares, and he showed me what double rabbets are. It seems quite reasonable to think the contrivance might prove effectual. Such a safe costs from eight to sixteen dollars.



If you could only buy off the roaches with an outlay of sixteen dollars, it would be fortunate; but the pests don't stop at what are usually considered "things to eat." The bare china-closet, innocent of crust or crumb, is as much patronized by them as the most tempting safe. The wood-box, the tool-box, any box, any trunk, drawer, wardrobe, any clothing hung up or folded away carefully, or thrown down carelessly, furnishes them hiding-places, though I have not found they eat clothing; they only like it—might be said to be fond of dress. They display their vanity also by a fondness for looking-glasses; mirrors that we brought down new a year ago are badly spotted.

But the worst of all is their mischievous passion for books. Such works as they do not eat they disfigure so, that the books look as if lemon juice had been squeezed over them. A book-case in Florida is a sorry sight. A strange feature of this is that the roaches seem to have a discriminating literary taste, and make choice of books. My "Gibbon" and "Bryant" they like the best of all; "Scott" they fancy a good deal, while "Macaulay" and "Shakespeare" they slight entirely. Moving the books about in the case does no good, and makes no difference. "Gibbon" and "Bryant" are always ahead in the vote of the roaches. The matter grew curious, and it was only the other day that I was helped to a solution by an old settler here, whom I asked if there was any remedy for roaches?

"Oh, yes; some use Costar's Roach Poison."

I had tried that and I had tried borax; but my roaches liked "Gibbon" better than Costar.

"They are just ruining my books," I said, "I don't know what to do."

"Yes, they will," said the experienced Floridian, "especially the green ones."

That's the secret; "Gibbon" is green, "Bryant" is green, "Scott" is light brown, so is "Thackeray," while "Shakespeare" and "Macaulay" are both very dark.

But my space is filled, and I have only got through with the A B C of our pests. I will take time to say, however, that "D" and "E" stand for no plagues, but to make up for the deficiency "F" stands for Florida flea.

Florida fleas are, I suppose, no worse than other fleas, and some enthusiasts do go so far as to say they are no worse than in the Northern States, but I am of the opinion that nowhere north of Egypt does the champion hopper occupy so important a place in the ranks of torments. Still, it is principally in towns or settlements or on old plantations where hogs are kept, that the flea becomes a source of almost unbearable annoyance.

The only protection is Dalmatian insect powder, which is best applied with a small pocket bellows called the "Oriental Powder Gun." Powder and gun are both to be found at the village stores

throughout the State, and the game is abundant enough everywhere.

Flies are, the year around, about as troublesome as during mid-summer at the North. We had none at first, or during the first year, and the experience of the older settlers led us to hope it was only a passing annoyance, but it has proved otherwise.

After all, the pest most irritating to many persons is something that I hardly dare to call a gnat, for some one before me, writing to a Northern paper and telling tales out of school, had the audacity to affirm that we were afflicted with gnats, and he received such abuse from some gallant defender of Florida's perfections as would warn others to beware how they say anything against Florida. But as I like Florida, and shall have a great deal to say hereafter of the delights and benefits of my new home, I think perhaps I may whisper in strictest confidence that there is here a very small, black, winged creature that comes sometimes in multitudes; and throughout the summer, when the air is still, they are abundant enough to be very provoking. They make no noise, they do not bite, but they settle all over your face, and love above all things to get into your eyes. They are believed by many to carry from person to person a disease of the eye said to be prevalent here, but of this I know nothing. Fanning is the only way of warding off their attacks.

Hawks make chicken-raising here a difficult matter, as there are hawks of all sizes to suit all sizes of chickens; so that even grown fowls are not quite safe.

An experienced poultry fancier in Louisiana sent me word that strychnine fed to the chickens with their meal would not hurt them, but would kill every hawk that ate one of the chickens.

This struck me as a daring proceeding, and I took the precaution to ask one of the natives about it. He said he had never heard of strychnine being given, but he knew *nux vomica* was good; and he further informed me that *nux vomica* would kill anything born or hatched with the eyes shut, but in proper doses would not harm any animal born with the eyes open.

I have tried the remedy frequently and can testify that it does not kill chickens or turkeys, and I believe it does kill hawks as the administration of the drug has invariably been followed by a cessation of the losses in the poultry yard.

Hawks are aided in their depletion of the poultry yard by owls, opossums, foxes, and skunks. Poultry houses have to be made very open, roof and sides being of slats nailed close enough to keep out the above named enemies, but open enough to admit sun, wind, and rain freely. This is necessary, it seems, in this climate to secure the health of the chickens.

The floor of the poultry house, and especially the floor of the coops for young broods, must be of wood; or if the house is built on

the ground some kind of foundation under ground is necessary to keep skunks from digging an entrance way.

Hogs are a great nuisance here. They are so slim they can squeeze through a pretty close fence. They are so light and active they can jump a low fence. They are such good rooters they can get under almost any kind of a fence, and they are such good swimmers that they can take advantage of the fine groves with lake fronts. The hogs and cattle which are allowed to run at large make a greater expenditure for fencing necessary than seems just, in a country given up almost exclusively for fruit-growing.

Mosquitoes are not among our great pests in this part of Florida. No one need dread them. But I receive so many inquiries in regard to them that I shall endeavor to give a very careful account of them. In the town of Orlando, the people do not use bars at any time of the year. Here in the country we have had until this summer no mosquitoes in the daytime; they were only troublesome at night, when, of course, bars were sufficient protection, but there has appeared this year a little mosquito as small as a gnat and about as annoying. It does not bite but sings without hope or reward, and is very troublesome in the daytime.

Red bugs are sometimes a painful reminder of a recent ramble in the woods, especially if you have been tempted to rest on a fallen tree, or to take home with you any pine cones which the little red bugs have appropriated. A little oil of turpentine cures their bites, and you soon learn to know when the remedy is necessary. Rats and mice have made their appearance and promise to be quite as troublesome as it is their nature to be. They were an unknown pest when we came here, and until the last year, but they have doubtless become interested in all that is being said about Florida and have come to see about it.

All cultivated ground is infested with a little ball-shaped burr, called sand-spur. It might be termed a vegetable porcupine, it is so prickly. After a walk through a grove, not perfectly free of weeds, your clothing will be covered with them. You will naturally try to pick off the burrs, and that is just what they want you to do—it gives them the opportunity to leave a microscopic splinter or two in your fingers, while they still cling as fast as ever to your clothes. You can scrape most of them off with a knife, or comb them off, but the most effectual way is to take them off with the teeth. It is safe, too; for, though it seems strange, the tongue is never pricked with them, its very sensitiveness seeming to guard it against the stickers.

Many dogs delight in freeing your clothing of sand spurs, and begin picking them off as soon as you come near. Some cats find this a pleasant pastime; also, occasionally, chickens will pick them off.

Salamanders seem to be a kind of mole rat. They burrow under the ground, and close after them the holes where they enter.

They throw up mounds of sand about a foot high and about two feet in diameter. These mounds are usually in groups, those where the salamanders have recently been at work being of the dark, fresh earth, while the older mounds are more or less bleached, even to whiteness, by the sun and weather, thus marking the course of their abandoned ruins. These animals are very destructive to orange trees. They eat the tap root right off, and usually succeed in killing the tree. They must be either poisoned or trapped, but they are very cunning and hard to catch.

I believe this ends the list of our pests. Our privations are those incident to most new countries. Prominent among them is the lack of fine schools. There is provision for public schools only four or five months in the year, after which a private school often supplies the deficiency for the remainder of the term. This locality would be just the place for a school of unquestioned excellence; one well endowed, or else carried on by some one of ample means, who could afford to be independent of patronage until the excellence of his school would compel attendance, and the payment of such prices as good education demands. Such a school would furnish a much desired place for the education of invalid Northern girls, and while much patronage from the immediate neighborhood could not be expected at once, there are many bright-eyed little folks growing up here whose fathers, by the time the children are old enough, will be able to pluck gold from the trees to pay liberally for their education.

The most distressing need of the country is a laboring class. It is often impossible to get servants for the house or laborers for the field. Women get \$10.00 a month for housework. Men work for no less than \$1.25 a day. Carpenters get from \$1.50 to \$3.00, according to skill. A hundred hard-working men and women could find work here in this neighborhood, and I am told the conditions are nearly the same about every live town. Any man who can chop, or cut down trees, or split rails, or build fences, or who can use tools of almost any kind need not fear any lack of work. Any woman who can cook, wash, and iron, will not find it difficult to choose her employer.

The advantages the country offers to such persons is the ease with which saved earnings may be applied to bettering the fortune. I know a woman now, a Yankee woman, who has taken up a homestead of 160 acres, and who lives on her place the length of time each year that the law requires, puts such improvements on it as she is able, and works in a family the rest of the year, doing the cooking, washing, and ironing to get money to carry on her grove.

In a few years she will be able to say—as a gentleman I saw the other day, whose trees had netted him this year \$16.50 each—  
“The trouble with me now is to know what to do with my money.”



## LETTER V.

## HOW TO BUILD, WHAT TO BUILD, AND THE PROBABLE COST.

THE cheapest building is a log house. The smooth, straight pines that usually stretch up from thirty to forty feet before the branches begin, furnish material almost prepared. As the pines must be disposed of in order to make an orange grove, it is not much more expensive to put the logs into the form of a cabin than to roll and burn them, or to place them in winrows to rot, as many prefer to do. The next building in cost is a balloon house, which a year ago was the prevailing style about here. Such houses were often begun and finished within a week. But now the new houses in and about Orlando—eighty within the last five months—are neatly-finished, wooden houses, built, for the most part, on brick foundations, plastered and weather-boarded, often painted, furnished with broad, covered porches, and the yards fenced.

The foundations of these lately-built houses consist of low pillars of brick, joined together with a network of brick, thus affording ventilation, and at the same time preventing the space under the house from being used as a resort for fowls and other animals, wild or domestic, or from being too convenient a receptacle for fishing-poles, tubs, and old tin cans.

This brick underpinning is a great improvement on the old log props that abounded a few months ago. Indeed, describing Orlando (and I understand it is the same with most Florida towns), is like picturing the changing view in a kaleidoscope. The improvements come so fast that even a month marks a great change. Already there are houses with mansard roofs, bay windows, and other pretensions to architectural embellishment; and I am now able to report that all the old pine stumps are out of the streets, and that we have sidewalks.

The cost of building varies from the \$100 and \$150 log house to the \$200 and \$500 balloon house, up to the \$1,000 to \$3,000 frame house. The best brick—poor enough at best—are \$20 a thousand. Lumber, from \$16 to \$22 a thousand. Shingles from \$4 to \$6. Carpenters from \$2 to \$3 a day. Laying brick, including cost of mortar, from \$5 to \$6.50 a thousand. The greatest trouble about building is getting lumber. The mills about are here kept busy, and much of the building material is brought from a distance from mills along the railroad, and some of it even from Jacksonville. But the demand is far ahead of the supply, and everybody that builds is sure to receive only part of his order at best. For the rest he must wait. We have succeeded in getting our brick and shingles, but as the recipe for building a house with only roof and foundation was not sent on with the material, we are waiting. A



friend who has just moved into his partly-finished house, says he got his lumber only by going to the mill every day, urging his necessity, and prevailing by means of his importunity.

#### WHERE TO BUY ORANGE TREES.

Trees are generally set in groves from two to five years old. They cost from fifty cents to one dollar each. They can be bought sometimes from private groves in the neighborhood, and always from the nurseries throughout the State—Mr. J. Bidwell, Arlington Nurseries, Jacksonville; Messrs. Lipsey & Christie, Archer, Fla.; Mr. Walker, Orlando.

Mr. Bidwell has bought and cleared land adjoining Orlando on the south, and is now removing his nurseries here. He took a thorough survey of the State, and having the whole State to choose from, he selected this place, which we who have settled here think is a great compliment to our judgment and foresight.

Mr. Walker, from Anchorage, Ky., has also started a nursery here, and we hope that both he and Mr. Bidwell will have abundant success in business, while they, at the same time, with their luxurious displays of tropical plants, afford pleasant places for our friends to visit, and thus add to the delights of a trip to this part of Florida.

I have just paid a bill for one hundred budded, four-year-old orange trees, which I bought and had set out in a grove, of which I have charge, the owner being a non-resident:

One hundred orange trees (budded).....	\$50 00
Horse, cart, and man.....	6 00
Six extra men setting and digging.....	9 00
Total.....	<u>\$65 00</u>

#### WHY ARE COWS NOT KEPT UP?

Florida cows graze. They will not eat hay or slop. One or two of them, perhaps, have been taught to feed like civilized cows; but such genteel behavior is probably the effect of the persistence of the ancestral traits from a herd of blooded cattle introduced here just before the war. At any rate, to the ordinary Florida cow anything in trough, rack, or bucket is looked on with disdain. It is grass or nothing with her, and she generally sees to it that it is grass. A fence between her and pastures green is simply a joke. Her calf can follow in any leap, and so much the better for the calf; for the maternal instinct is not strong in the breed, and the cow can not be trusted to return to a calf so ridiculous as to allow itself to be penned.

"What! No milk! No butter!" exclaimed a visitor, who for years had read everything about Florida he could lay his hands on,

but who had not yet realized what it is to live without accustomed luxuries. "Why don't you have a cow?" he asked, with evident suspicion that the enervating influence of this Southern climate had had its predicted effect on the energies of his once vigorous friend.

"I paid \$25 for a cow last spring," answered the gentleman addressed. "A gentle creature she was said to be, and warranted to give two quarts of milk a day."

"Ah, well—two quarts—well, that's better than nothing. Was the milk rich?"

"I don't know. I never got near enough to the cow to shoot her, and can't be sure about the milk. I had six men chasing her half a day, over fences and through swamps. They finally caught the calf and penned it, and I supposed the cow would follow; but she left her calf to die—never came near—and I have not seen the cow since. I tried the experiment over again this spring with almost the same result—thought I had my fences all right, but over they went, right through the lake, swam like ducks, and planted themselves in the middle of the swamp. I am allowing them now to go at large, with their original bunch of cattle, till I can get a third story put on my fences."

The experiment of bringing Northern cattle here has not been tried to any great extent, but so far as it has been tried it has not been encouraging. There is no place where dairying would pay better than here, if one could succeed in keeping good cattle.

The native cattle are branded, and roam the open country in "bunches," as they are called. It is usual to pen them in fields and groves during the spring and early summer, "cowpenning" being the best means of fertilizing lands. After a time the cows become infested with ticks, grow lean and die, unless they are turned out to graze.

Calves are never taken from the cows, but run with them, and the owner only gets the milk which the calf is good enough to leave. Education—if anything is ever done with these Florida cows—will have to begin with the calves. Until they can be taught to think a mess of meal and water is better than cow's milk, there is no prospect of reform. It's a hard lesson, too, for a little calf to learn; for even we human beings find it difficult to prefer our cow condensed in tin cans, "Eagle brand" though they be, and our butter strong enough to have come all the way by itself from Goshen, to the rich, new milk and the golden butter of which we even yet have a faint remembrance. [At this time, July 1883, cows are becoming more common. There are some Jerseys here, and a cow called the Guinea cow, from Georgia, is being brought in extensively. These are good cows and give from three to five gallons of milk a day. They seem to thrive perfectly well. We have had fresh milk and butter all summer.]

## WHY ARE VEGETABLES SO SCARCE AT TIMES?

Gardening here is something to be learned anew, however successful you may have been elsewhere. Something is almost sure to happen to ruin your prospect of vegetables. There are rabbits and cattle and hogs and bugs and worms, as matters of course; but, in addition to things that must ordinarily be provided for and against, to succeed here undoubtedly, we must have means of shading and watering. I think with sheds having slatted roofs and windmills for pumping water, there would be no limit to the productions this soil, well fertilized, would produce. I hope to be able before long to give the result from the use of a windmill, as we have a Champion windmill from Albion, Mich., in process of erection.

Oh, the seeds and seeds and seeds, that I have put into the ground, and watched and waited in vain for the green blade to appear, while the sun was baking them in the sand! Oh, the beans and peas, old enough to stand alone and even beginning to run, that I have found cut off in the bloom of youth by the rabbits! Tomatoes scorched! Cucumbers dwindled! Corn dwarfed! Melons—but why pursue the list of disasters?

After you have experienced all these things somebody will tell you: "Why you mustn't plant this in January, you must plant it in April. You mustn't plant that in May, you must plant in October," and so turn the seasons topsy-turvy, till you doubt if anybody knows what is the time of year.

Still, wonderful vegetables do grow here. Cabbages so large I would not dare tell their size. Radishes and turnips and sweet potatoes of such magnitude that you are amazed, and so with most vegetables; and yet if you go to the stores to buy, for instance, at this time, you will find no old Irish potatoes and very inferior new ones, no onions, no peas or asparagus, even white beans scarcely to be found, and no fruit, though cabbages, tomatoes, and cucumbers are abundant just now.

A lady who came here last winter from New Orleans expecting, with her boys, to engage in gardening, went to the stores and was so dismayed at the absence of vegetables, that she returned home without taking time to investigate further. "Why," said she, "I couldn't find a cabbage."

One great trouble is that vegetables decay as soon as they ripen. They must be used at once. You can not lay by a store of onions and potatoes or anything else for use, as you need them; you are obliged to dispose of what you raise just as soon as it is gathered.

## LETTER VI.

## A PRESCRIPTION FOR FLORIDA FEVER.

I think I have almost earned the title of M. D., and at this rate bid fair to win fame as a specialist, judging from the hosts of people afflicted with the prevailing disease of "Florida fever" who apply to me for help, advice, or relief. But as there are few physicians willing to devote their whole time to the care of the sick without fee or favor, so I must beg my numerous patients—to attend to whose wants individually would consume every day's time—to pardon my neglect to furnish private prescriptions for their malady, and read carefully "Home and Farm," wherein I shall endeavor to attend to each case as carefully as possible, and at the same time meet the necessities of numbers of others afflicted with like disorder.

"Florida fever," I find from a study of the cases before me, comes from quite a variety of causes, among the principal of which are love of change, desire for pleasant climate, effort to escape unhappy conditions of life at home, hope of health—all culminating in a wish to make money speedily and easily.

The cure for "Florida fever" is coming to Florida. It is a sure cure, but works in opposite ways. You either find the change to suit you, the climate what you desire, the escape from entanglements at home assured, your health improved, your success in business encouraging, mills going, towns growing, settlers pouring in, the whole country booming, and whatever you seek and hope for most, realized to its fullest extent; or, on the other hand, you find on coming here that everything disappoints you. In spite of all you have heard and read, nothing is as you expected it to be; the soil looks so hopelessly barren, your health does not improve, you are shocked to find that people sicken and die here as elsewhere. It seems to you money is not so easily made after all; it took work and determination at home to make a living, it takes the same here. You conclude Florida is not Paradise; and if you can get away you go, completely cured. You have been inoculated, and the disease can never touch you again.

The only way for anybody to do who wants to know about Florida, is to come and see for himself. Persons write me all sorts of questions impossible for me to answer except in the words "come and see." I can not tell whether "a young lady reared in the midst of luxury and fashion would find life in Florida a relief from the ennui of an idle life." She would find it a change; of that I am sure. I do not know whether it would be the best thing for "a widow with three small children to move to Florida with the expectation of keeping boarders." So much depends on the woman.



herself. If she is one who would have moderate success elsewhere she would be likely to have a greater success here, for boarders and oranges are the hope of the country.

I do not know whether anybody would *like* Florida. I only know that I like it in spite of all its pests and privations, and that many others like it, especially gentlemen, that many live here who only stay from necessity, and that others have come from distant homes, having sold business and household goods, only to find the aspect of life here unendurable, and have turned about and gone home again without staying long enough to give Florida a fair trial.

Many write asking me to procure situations for them. A moment's thought would show such persons that even if I had the time I can not justly find places for strangers, of whose ability and faithfulness I know nothing. I can only say there is plenty of work here. There is a living here for every one, and more than a living for the industrious and provident. We have only a half dozen or so paupers in the county. No one need be afraid of lack of employment, provided he is willing and able to work at whatever he can find to do; but his place to work he will have to come and find for himself.

The only persons whom I might possibly find opportunity to aid are women who want places as servants. In some cases I can find homes for them, as there is a great scarcity of domestic help here.

I will now take up in order the questions that have come to me, and I hope in this way that each of my correspondents who is disappointed of receiving a private answer will find here not only the information he himself sought from me, but much besides, which, though in answer to others, will be of interest and use to him.

#### HOMESTEADS.

Any man or unmarried woman or widow over twenty-one years of age, who is a citizen of the United States, or who has declared his intention to become such, can enter under the homestead law 160 acres of government land. He must then reside continually on this land for five years, and be able to prove his residence there. This does not prevent his seeking work elsewhere, but it must be done in such way that his home will be at his homestead. It costs \$14 in fees to enter a homestead. If, at any time after the expiration of six months and before the expiration of five years, he wishes to buy the homestead instead of living on it the required length of time, he can do so at \$1.25 an acre—\$200

If a man dies before his title to his homestead is completed, his widow or his children can complete the time and claim the land.

There are thousands of acres of government land yet vacant in Orange county.

One way to find out about such lands is to obtain maps of the



township in which you would like to settle. A township embraces an area of six miles square. These maps can be obtained of L. A. Barnes, Register, or John F. Rollins, United States Receiver, United States Land Office, Gainesville, Florida. The cost of the maps I do not know, but any one interested can easily be informed by addressing either of the above officers, or information can be obtained; not only of the locality of such lands, but also of their quality and desirableness, from our county surveyor, or Governor Sinclair, or some other of the land agents here, to whom every acre of land in the county is as an open book, and who for a suitable fee, will give the benefit of their knowledge of the country and locate the lands if desired.

It would not be safe to enter a homestead or buy land in Florida without knowing all about it, for no small portion of the State is under water, and you might find your homestead in the bottom of a lake.

#### STATE LANDS.

There is but little State land left in the country, scarcely any that is worth anything; but in the counties south of us there is a large range of rich country which is now in market, and which will be very valuable. Speculators are buying it very fast. State lands can not be entered as homesteads, but can be bought at \$1.25 per acre.

Maps of vacant State lands can be obtained from the Commissioner of State Lands, Tallahassee, Fla.

#### CHARACTER OF SOIL.

A prominent gentleman from Jeffersonville, Ind., who came down here a short time ago to see the country, does not like it. He says that "the soil is so poor that the land of a Scott county farm would make a good fertilizer for it."

The soil of Orange county varies from the richest hummock to the poorest sand, interspersed with a great deal of flat, low swamps.

The flat woods are used only as cattle ranges. On hummock lands everything grows richly without fertilizing, but to live on such lands is perilous to life. I know some lands, however, in Indiana—whether in Scott county or not, I will not say—that might be benefited by a sprinkling of hummock over them, without any danger, either, of the people "chillin' and feverin'" more than they do now.

The pine lands have to be richly fertilized to produce vegetables and grain, and well fertilized to bring on orange trees successfully.

"WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A LIVING WHILE MY ORANGE TREES ARE GROWING."

In answer to this frequent question, I think I can hardly do better than to copy from a correspondent of the *Atlanta Constitution*:

"Plant vegetables, plant cassava, plant arrow-root, raise melons, split rails at \$1 per hundred, build cabins for your neighbors at \$1 50 per day raise chickens, catch fish and eat them, make fertilizers, shoot alligators on Lake Kissimmee and sell their hides, hire out to your neighbors at \$30 per month and work your own place at night, sell land, swap horses, work on some one of the railroads, put up saw-mills, cut and haul posts and stakes, plant nursery trees, flowers, etc. You can't starve. Fish are for the taking, and sweet potatoes are indigenous to the soil. We have 8,000 people in Orange county and only three paupers, and we have never seen a beggar in the county."

This means, be willing to do any sort of work. What you have been accustomed to do at home you can perhaps find to do here; but if not, you must be ready to do something else. It will be a hard struggle and a rough life unless you have some means to tide over the first years.

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LETTER VII.

"WOULD YOU ADVISE ME TO GO TO FLORIDA?"

YOU must come and see for yourself. I can not hope to present the anomalies of this country to you in so vivid a manner that, on coming here, things will not make a new impression on you. So much depends on what you have been used to. So much depends upon your ability to adapt yourself to conditions of life for which no former state of existence can have in any way prepared you.

When the move is contemplated on account of poverty and with a view to improving the fortune, it is better generally to send one member of the family in advance to make way for the rest. Let one come who is able, energetic, and willing. He will be sure to find work. There is plenty of it. Let the rest stay at home and work, if need be, till a start is secured here, and then there will be no risk in moving.

It is possible to live here on almost nothing. Thoreau would have reduced his expenses fifty per cent. and then would have found the luxury of living too enervating; but most persons are not willing to endure such hardness.

I knew a negro man, one of the best and most faithful workmen in the world. He makes \$1.25 a day, sleeps in a barn, and makes his fire on the sand out-of-doors, does his cooking in a frying-pan and a bucket, and keeps in good health. He has a wife and three children away from here, and he saves for them like a hero.

"What do you live on, William? Do you have coffee?"

"Coffee! Why, no ma'am. Coffee'd make me black. Tea's good enough for me."

"Did you have tea for your breakfast this morning?"

"No ma'am. No tea o' mornin'. Tea's out. I het some water and put 'lasses in it. I hed some taters in the ashes, and I'll hev some bread for dinner," he added exultantly.

"What does it cost you a week, William, for food? I want to tell the people how little they can live on."

"Well, ma'am, the least I can get along on is seventy-five cents a week. Sometimes it costs me eighty—that is, leaving out my tobacco."

"What do you buy for your week's supply?"

"I buy twenty cents worth of meal, thirty cents for meat—bacon, and the rest I spend for 'taters and 'lasses—must have a little sweetnin' along."

So you see life can be sustained and even sweetened on eighty cents a week. I have promised William some fishing-tackle, and I fully expect to be able to report a further reduction in his expenses.

There is a family living twelve miles from here—father, mother, and eleven children, to whom no doubt an expenditure of seventy-five cents each a week would seem extravagant.

Twenty-two years ago the man took up a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres. He cleared the land for his plantation and grove, built his log house himself, made every piece of furniture the family have ever used—beds, stools, tables, benches. His wife worked with him, hoed cotton by his side, nursed the orange trees, and let her children grow up free, and unembarrassed by more than one garment each. They have now one of the prettiest bearing groves in this part of the State; and, if they only knew the art of spending money, might afford to improve their style of living, and indulge in doctor's visits with other luxuries; but they go on contentedly passing life in their log cabins which have grown like a honeycomb as the family increased. They have black coffee three times a day, without milk or sugar, indulge in biscuit occasionally, live sometimes six weeks without meat, and depend for the most part on corn bread and sweet potatoes. They are clean people and have nice-looking beds with mattresses made by themselves of cotton which they raised.

They entertain strangers hospitably with the best they have, and make them welcome to their cabin home, which has neither chimney nor window glass, and whose roof lets in the sky.

Provisions here in Orlando are, I think, a fourth, perhaps a

third, more than in Northern cities. I will quote the prices of some articles as they are at this time. These prices vary, of course, somewhat at different times of the year; but most things keep steadily a little in advance of Northern quotations.

The best flour is \$10.75; hams, 18c.; rice, 10c.; meal, 3½c.; potatoes, \$2; sweet potatoes, 50c.; butter, 40c.; eggs, 25c.; chickens, from 50 to 75c.; beef, 10c.; venison 10c.; fish, 10c.; lard, 15c.; Florida syrup, 50c.; tea, from 50c to \$1; coffee, best Rio, 20c.; granulated sugar, 12½c.

Oranges vary from 1½c. to 5c. each, according to the season. Lemons, when plentiful, sell at 20c. a dozen. Guavas usually sell at \$1 a bushel, but go to waste for want of a much needed jelly factory. Peaches sold last summer at \$4; pineapples 50c.; grape fruit from 1½c. to 10c. each.

All vegetables are in demand, and bring good prices. There are times in the year when it is impossible to get vegetables—when even an Irish potato is not to be found, and we have to depend on canned goods.

Condensed milk at 25c. a can is used almost altogether, as very few persons have cows, and those that do have them keep them up only a few months in summer. Beef for the greater part of the year is lean and tough. When the grass starts in the spring there is at once an improvement in the beef, and by summer time it is very juicy and fat.

The people depend for a supply of water on the clear lakes or on drive wells, or on wells dug and walled up with brick or wooden curbing. These are supplied with pumps or with sweeps. From any of these sources you can depend on water as warm as the day. In the coolest well about here the water, I am told, is 76°. In ours it is 76°.

The water after being drawn from lake or well, is cooled, unless ice is used, by hanging the bucket or monkey jugs containing it where they will swing in the breeze through the night and be in the shade through the day. A covered porch or the shade of a large tree at the door is usually the place chosen; and the porous earthen jug, called "the monkey," suspended in the cool shade is as familiar and restful a sight in our Florida homes as the ever-present hammock swinging near.

When we have to depend upon cooling the water by the means I have mentioned, it is possible to thus lower the temperature from ten to fifteen degrees below the temperature of the day. But now we have the welcome sound of the steam whistle from an ice factory in Orlando, and we have daily an abundance of ice. The water of which the ice is made is drawn from a deep well and distilled, so that it is unquestionably pure.

Board at the principal hotels is from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day. At the boarding-houses and in private families it is from \$30 to \$40 a month.



In answer to Mrs. R. L. O. and other correspondents, I am glad to be able to give comforting assurances in regard to the freedom from frosts, in this part of Florida at least. In the winter of 1880, the severest known here, it is said, for about thirty years, not even the new growth of the orange trees was touched. Lemons and limes, which are more tender than oranges, showed not the least signs of injury. In the northern counties of Florida the oranges on the trees were frozen, and in some places the trees were killed. I am unable to say just how far south the freeze extended, but it is claimed that not an orange was frozen in Orange county. I know none were frozen here, and it is constantly affirmed by the old residents that no frost ever did injure the trees in this region.

The crop of 1881, however, was greatly reduced from some cause. The promise was fine, but just as the oranges were ripening they split open and fell from the trees by thousands. This was by some growers attributed to the cold of the previous winter, but by others to cessation of rain which occurred in the midst of the rainy season. After a fortnight of dry weather, the daily rains began again. It is thought that the peel of the orange had begun to harden, and the rains started the growth of the fruit anew and so caused the orange to split.

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## LETTER VIII.

### THE COST OF AN ORANGE GROVE AND THE TIME REQUIRED TO BRING IT TO PERFECTION.

AFTER all it is not the comforts or discomforts of life in Florida that are of first importance to most persons who are led to seek homes here, certainly not to those who are looking to it with a view to profitable investment of surplus funds or scanty savings; it is rather the expenses and profits attending the starting of an orange grove, caring for it, and gathering the fruit from it.

What generally seems the most hopeless feature of the whole proceeding to one about to begin a grove is, in fact, the thing of smallest moment, and that is waiting. Ten years seems a long time to wait. How short it really is we who are getting old well know; and if those who are younger and who fret with the impatience of youth, would but consider that they must wait somewhere, it might help them to deal with the question fairly. Time will go on whatever they do. After awhile ten years will have gone by whether they have an orange grove or not, and it is very likely at the end of ten years a grove will be worth more than any other investment they would have made.



In many instances, a very fair estimate for bringing a grove into profitable bearing is five hundred dollars an acre, including the value of land at from fifty to one hundred dollars. It can hardly be done for less and will probably cost more, especially if all labor and superintendence must be hired.

If the owner is here and does much of the work himself, the cost is, of course greatly modified, and in many ways, by close attention to economical methods the usual expenses may be lessened. It often happens that bargains in land may be found by those who give themselves time to look about for them, and right in the midst of localities where land is selling at high figures it may sometimes be bought at old prices.

Bargains in trees can sometimes be found. Fertilizers can be largely gathered and hoarded, instead of all being bought outright, and in various ways the man who looks after his own business will be able to save money.

It is undoubtedly better to live here and see to these things yourself; but if this is not practicable, it is possible, I find, to have a grove brought on successfully while the owner is absent. It is possible, also, and very usual to throw away time and money in this way. There are some such groves shamefully neglected; but there are others, whose owners never saw them, which show there are honest men here who can care for the golden trees upon the plan of the golden rule. The groves under their charge look, except for the absence of the clump of largest and greenest trees that always marks the dwelling-place, just as well as anybody's trees.

One great difficulty that managers of groves have, is the fact that non-residents are apt to have erroneous notions in regard to the cost of caring for groves. They are often misled by foolish advisers, who greatly underestimate the expense, and think there must be something wrong when their agents call for money and more money.

Many persons deceived by delusive calculations often set forth in newspapers, are apt to consider solely the items, "Land, \$50 an acre; trees, 50 cents a piece, eighty trees to the acre; fifth year, 400 oranges to the tree; oranges, two cents each." It is a plain problem: The cost of an acre is \$90; in five years the return is \$640. A good investment!

I heard recently of a man who bought land five years ago, had a grove set out at once, and had not done one thing to it since. He wrote down this winter to inquire what his income would be from his trees. His outgo will be considerable by the time those old trees are dug up and thrown away, and his grove is begun again.

Before I begin estimating the cost of an orange grove I would call attention to the fact that the methods of cultivation and procedure are almost as numerous as the owners of the groves; and various methods demand various outlays.

All kinds of theories and practices are advocated. One thinks oranges do best on low ground, because the trees are found wild in such places. Another tells you that water is death to the orange tree; that the tree will apparently thrive on low ground while small, but that the instant its foot touches water it will begin to die.

One will tell you that land too high is as bad as land too low; that there is a happy medium which is just right, and that the only way to find out whether you have selected the right spot is to plant your grove and see if it does well. If it does not thrive, you may know you have made a mistake.

One will say he wouldn't have a budded tree; another will not have seedlings. One thinks it will not do to transplant budded trees; that they must be set out, get a good start and then be budded; another thinks this plan ruinous, and would not have anything but a nursery-grown budded tree. One will tell you the shaddock is the best stock for budding; another will have nothing but sweet orange; another, sour orange; while others think the grape fruit, and others the lemon, best of all.

One will say trees should never be plowed. I heard the owner of a twenty thousand-dollar grove say he injured his trees when he first came, eight years ago, by turning the hot sand on the roots in July; and now he never plows his grove, but works it entirely with the hoe, and so clean that, to use his own expression, "a goose couldn't find her living in it." Another believes the more his grove is plowed the better, and people say of his place, "It is plowed to death." One says, "Never plow in summer;" another says, "I wouldn't think of plowing in winter." One says, "Fertilize, fertilize, fertilize;" another says, "Don't." One says, "Plant your trees not more than fifteen feet apart. Trees do best when densely shaded, and besides they protect each other from the winds." Others tell you they ought to be twenty, thirty, and even forty feet apart.

Out of all this confusion of conflicting advice there is one comforting conclusion, viz: you can hardly make a mistake. Whatever you do you will be sure to be following somebody's advice; and there is comfort, too, in the thought that a tree that can stand such variety of treatment, and adapt itself to conditions so antagonistic, must be in the very region of all the earth where it is destined to thrive in spite of all hindrances.

One hundred and fifty dollars will usually cover, and in many instances it has more than covered, the expense of setting out an acre. It will clear, fence, plow, and stake the land and buy and fertilize at the time of planting, and plant eighty trees four years old from the seed and one year from the bud.

The grove is then usually plowed three or four times a year at a cost of two or three dollars an acre for each plowing. The trees should be fertilized at least once a year at a constantly-increasing expense for fertilizers, as they grow larger. They must be hoed frequently. They must be trimmed and the sprouts removed.

Trees killed by salamanders or scale insects or wood ants, and those that die from any other cause, must be replaced by others.

These enemies of the orange tree must be constantly guarded against and trapped, or otherwise circumvented.

The cost of a team is, at the lowest, \$2 a day; and no man works for less than \$1.25 a day.

Fences must be repaired or renewed. Rail fences are specially liable to be burned from the fires in the woods. Indeed, incidental expenses defy all exact estimates. You may calculate to a nicety what it will cost to bring a grove into bearing, and then be pretty sure it will cost more; or by determination, energy, hard work, and self-denial, you may bring the cost greatly under ordinary estimates.

I think, perhaps, I can not come nearer giving an estimate, that would gain the consent of most successful orange growers, than by copying from the pamphlet issued in the interest of "Winter Park," the words of Mr. C. C. Beasley, of Maitland:

"This estimate calls for the very highest culture, and supposes the owner shall hire all work done.

"Take an average acre of your land, and the cost of starting will be—

Cutting down and removing trees .....	\$ 15 00
Taking out stumps .....	15 00
Grubbing, when needed .....	15 00
Plowing .....	3 00
Fencing, not over .....	25 00
One hundred trees, four years old and one year from bud .....	75 00
Setting stakes and planting .....	7 50
Fertilizer when planted .....	2 50
	<hr/>
	\$158 00

"Your total outlay for the first five years, including start and land, will not exceed \$500."

The total expense, including fertilizers, to take these one hundred trees through five years, he estimates as follows:

Cost, first year .....	\$ 28 00
Second year .....	34 00
Third year .....	45 00
Fourth year .....	51 00
Fifth year .....	57 00
	<hr/>
	\$215 00
Cost of starting .....	158 00
Cost of land .....	100 00
	<hr/>
	\$473 00

This, with land at a high figure, leaves a margin on \$500 for unforeseen expenses. But, as I said, it would be hard to make or find an estimate that would exactly suit, in every item, the experi-

ence of all growers. In the above the number of trees to the acre would generally be thought too great, the estimate for setting stakes, planting, and fertilizing too low, while the cost of fencing depends altogether on the kind of fence.

I can give the exact cost of starting a young grove. I took charge of a five-acre place November 1, 1882. The land was already cleared, and should, according to the conditions of purchase, have been free from stumps; but I found that the negroes who had been employed to clear the land had, in many cases, covered up stumps in place of removing them. The land should have been grubbed, but this also was not well done. Rails were on the place for fencing. The land and the work already done cost one hundred and ten dollars an acre. The bill I give below contains every item of expense from November 1, 1882, to June 1, 1883—except the fees paid for superintending the grove—a matter I shall treat of separately.

Nov.	Guarding rails from fire.....	\$ 2 00
	Surveying for line of fence .....	1 00
	Breaking up five acres .....	17 50
	Laying fencing and grubbing .....	26 45
Jan.	199 trees, sweet seedling orange trees.....	99 50
	Staking five acres.....	7 67
	Setting out 199.....	16 07
	8 foot well dug and curbed with pine .....	3 61
	216 trees, including planting.....	127 60
	Man, horse, and wagon, watering trees at \$2.50 a day .....	5 25
	Spading, hoeing, and filling stump-holes.....	2 10
	1 barrel shell lime applied .....	2 00
Mar.	Plowing, at \$2.50 .....	12 50
	Grubbing.....	11 00
Apr.	Hoeing, at \$1.25 a day .....	2 81
June.	Plowing, at \$2 an acre .....	10 00
	5 pecks cow peas.....	2 77
	Boy dropping peas.....	60
	1 barrel ground bone.....	5 75
	Hoeing.....	2 25
	Putting up fence blown down.....	20
Total .....		\$358 63

These are not fancy figures or guesses but actual cost, and any one can judge from them for himself just about what his outlay must be to start a young grove. The trees in this grove are four and five-year-old sweet seedlings, and measure from an inch to two inches in diameter at the base, in height from four to eight feet. After this the trees are to be plowed three times a year, planted with cow peas three times, and hoed, fertilized, and trimmed every month.



## LETTER IX.

## THE PROFIT OF ORANGE-GROWING.

**I**N the usual estimate of the profit of orange-growing, one of the surest and most important gains is often lost sight of, and that is the gain in the virtue of patience certain to accrue to one who watches the growth of his trees up to the first encouraging blossom, and then on and on, year after year, to the time when the fruit really comes in quantities to sell.

Waiting is something that must be endured. Orange trees will take their time to grow and bloom and bear, and unless they are very well attended to it will be a very long time indeed.

There are, for example, three groves lying side by side, with whose history I am familiar. These groves are in various stages of advancement, according to the ages of the trees and the degree of culture they have received—the youngest being first in the race, having far surpassed the other two in size and bearing.

Where this youngest grove stands was a pine wood in the fall of 1876. Then the first forest tree was cut down. The land was cleared, and early in the spring of 1877, two-year-old orange seedlings were set out. These trees were budded late in the spring of 1879. Early in the spring of 1881, before they had been budded two years, they were full of blossoms. The blossoms and young fruit were picked off, as the trees were thought to be too young to be allowed to bear. In 1882, each tree was allowed to bear an orange or two; this year, a few more; and next year it is expected the crop will amount to something. Some of the trees this year have from forty to sixty oranges on them, which they will be allowed to mature.

The trees are fairly grown and thrifty, though they have not had the best care, and would have done still better with higher cultivation.

It will be seen, then, that these trees, counting from the seed to the first blossom, were six years old. Counting from the bud to the blossom, not quite two years old. The earliest paying crop is not expected till 1884, making it nine years from seed to fruit, and five years from the bud.

Time could have been gained on this grove by setting out four-year-old seedlings or four-year-old budded trees.

The second grove was set out one year before the first. These trees were five years old when set out, and thus had four years the start of the first mentioned grove, and ought, for two years or more, to have been bearing a good crop; but they have been so poorly cared for that the largest of them are no larger than those in the younger grove and have never borne a blossom, and many of the



trees are so stunted they never will amount to anything. Here, then, are trees eleven years old and still no oranges.

The third grove set out a few months before the first one, and of trees the same age, has been unfortunate. It was budded about three years ago, and after the buds started the tops of the trees were cut off as usual. Then the buds died, and only the stumps were left. The stumps, of course, had to be budded over, and all of this involved loss of time. This grove though well worked is not sufficiently fertilized to make fair growth. It will be some years before fruit is gathered from either of these last mentioned groves.

There is another grove, which I recently visited, whose dense green foliage almost conceals from view the dwelling in the midst of the trees. These trees are sweet seedlings, and have never been budded. As their growth is a practical demonstration of the best that may be done from the smallest possible beginning and in the shortest possible time, I think an accurate history of the grove will be more satisfactory than general estimates could be.

In the fall of the year 1868, there was held in Orlando a festival for the benefit of the Methodist church.

Mr. Holden, the owner of one of the oldest and most prosperous groves about here, sent a donation of oranges; and Mrs. H. W. Spier, who was active in making the work of the festival a success, used the oranges in making various confections and desserts. It was then that, inspired by the sight of such quantities of seed, the thought first presented itself to her of planting seed and raising orange trees.

Twenty-five of these little seedlings, when nothing more than mere switches, were taken from the nursery and set out about the house in grove form in April, 1871.

In the following fall another twenty-five from the nursery were set out; and the same year Mrs. Spier planted seeds in various places about the yard.

From these last seedlings, after a few years, trees were selected to remain where they had grown, and the rest were sold at seventy-five cents each, thus at once realizing a handsome profit and leaving room for the grove trees to spread themselves.

These last trees have had double advantage in fertilizing, being situated so as to receive the suds and refuse from the kitchen and wash-house, and some of them have outgrown the first trees planted, which had about three years' growth ahead of them. The largest tree measures thirty-six inches in circumference two feet from the ground, and the smallest measures eleven inches.

These sixty-five trees have been in bearing since 1877, when the first crop was two thousand oranges. The next year it was five thousand; the next, ten thousand; the next, thirty thousand; and in 1881, it was again thirty thousand.

Only about half of this crop was marketable those last two years, as the storm in August of 1880 blew the unripe oranges in

thousands from the trees, and in 1881 about one-half of the oranges were rendered unfit for market by their splitting open just as they were ripening; so that these estimates are what the trees bore in fruit, not what was actually sold. The largest shipment ever made from these sixty-five trees was ninety-three boxes—one hundred and twenty-eight oranges in a box. The price received from different sales has varied from two to four cents. One thousand oranges once shipped from this grove brought a return of \$42.

Seventeen barrels shipped from another grove in this locality netted \$100. But there is often just cause of complaint in the meager returns from consignments of this fruit; and there is much to be done in this branch of the business before results will be satisfactory to orange-growers. At present the best plan seems to be to sell the crop on the trees though at some sacrifice in price, the purchaser in this case picking, packing, and shipping the fruit, though in this case there is complaint that the pickers are reckless of the owners' interests and not only waste oranges, but injure the trees.

## LETTER X.

### NOVEL ORANGE CULTURE.

I LEARNED the other day of a method of keeping an orange grove that was entirely new to me, though I have since been informed that the plan is by no means new or merely experimental, and that it has been for many years in successful operation in a number of places.

The plan I refer to is hen culture. The owner of the grove I have in mind scatters every morning wheat screenings, oats, corn, or whatever he has in store for his chickens, around his orange trees, taking care to take the rows in order, a few each morning. The fowls during the day occupy themselves scratching up the hidden grain, and in this way not only is the ground kept well stirred, but weeds are kept down and insects are given the smallest chance of life.

This method of culture, designed to dispense with the use of plow and hoe, is obviously impracticable except in very small groves of perhaps not more than two or three acres, and where the owner is resident on the place.

There is a five-acre grove in Orlando that has lately been placed under this system of culture. The place is looking very fine, but the adoption of the new plan of cultivation is too recent to claim for it the credit of the very thriving young grove where it is used,

for until quite recently the place was plowed and hoed and fertilized in the usual fashion.

I am told there is a two-acre grove near Apopka successfully cultivated by hens, and another there worked altogether by turkeys.

#### ORANGE COUNTY FAIR.

A party of us went one day last week to the fair held at the grounds about three miles this side of Sanford.

We went up in the pretty rattan-seated coach of the South Florida railroad, stayed all night at the Sanford House, and went out to the fair grounds next morning.

The city of Sanford is improving with wonderful rapidity. The sight of the substantial buildings going up in all directions gave quite a shock to the self-complacency of the Orlando party, as we, from being accustomed to see houses, streets, and even districts springing up about us as if by magic, had come to think ourselves the people, and Orlando—Florida.

The Sanford House is just what a Southern hotel should be—large, airy, bright, shady, hospitable looking. The bed-rooms are sufficiently comfortable with cottage furniture, the halls are well carpeted, and the parlors are handsomely furnished.

The grounds are new, but laid out in pleasing walks and drives constructed of shells. The house overlooks the lake. The surrounding park slopes down to the water's edge, and is in full command of the pier where the boats coming and going present a lively scene. Across the lake, five miles wide at this point, is the town of Enterprise.

The rates at the Sanford House are three dollars a day. We had excellent shad, and the fare generally was good except the tea and coffee. I could not help wishing that day during the suffering of a headache brought on by a cup of the wretched coffee, that as lavish pains had been taken with the grounds of that beverage as had been bestowed on those of the park.

The excursion cars running every few minutes from Sanford to the fair grounds were only platform cars with backless benches. But this was of no moment, as the distance is only three miles and the run fast enough.

The country around Sanford is low; the water obtained from the wells only three or four feet deep from the surface is bad. The people depend for the most part on rain water, but the water-works are now about completed. We saw the derricks for the support of the reservoir as we went along and the iron pipes partly laid for conducting the water from a distant lake to the city.

The fair grounds are in an enclosure of ten acres, set apart for this purpose, I believe, by General Sanford, but not yet deeded to the corporation. There is some talk of moving the fair to Or-

lando, which move while it naturally meets with opposition from the Sanford people, as naturally has the support of Orlando.

Orlando is the county-seat. People of Orange look to it as their center of trade. They are accustomed to come here. It is easy of access. Many of the most successful exhibitors at the fair live here, as do many of those most efficient in working for it, and there are those here ready to donate extensive grounds for the purpose. Besides, Orlando has got to be so important and thriving that she claims, as a right, all that she desires. She expects shortly to have a population of four or five thousand. A railroad is on its way that will put us in direct communication with the North, so it seems inevitable that the fair must come to us; for people who run down from New York and Chicago and California to see Orange county products will not care to be obliged to make connection at this place with a branch road and go over to Sanford in order to see our big oranges and lemons, our mammoth cabbages and marvelous cauliflower flowers, and our gigantic sugar-cane.

A high picket-fence incloses the fair grounds. The grounds are bare and unshaded, without any attempt at design or ornament—no walks, no drives, no grottoes, no summer-houses, no trees, no seats—nothing but the unbroken level of the sandy ground, interspersed with patches of native wire-grass.

At one side of the fence was the shed for the poultry-show, which exhibit consisted of a few coops of fowls—some Plymouth Rocks and Leghorns, a pair of geese, a pair of ducks, and this was all.

With the exception of the poultry-shed there is nothing until you reach the other side of the ten-acre field, where stands the exhibition house with sheds attached, under whose roofs were displayed whatever there was there of fruit and flower from field and grove and farm.

The exhibition was meager. The fair, by no means creditable, and its effect, I should think, would be rather to scare strangers away from a country exhibiting so poor results of labor than to entice them to settle amongst us.

There were some very fine oranges, some fine lemons, limes, pine-apples, cabbages, strawberries—indeed, enough to show what might be done in the way of an exhibition if, by some means, the people could be induced to exert themselves; but as it was, I think the unanimous opinion was that the fair was a failure and altogether unworthy of Orange county.

Inside the house the most beautiful exhibit was some pelts of the Angora goat and a Cashmere lap robe belonging to Mr. Robert Scott, of Frankfort, Ky., who has a winter residence at Fort Reed, near Sanford.

In the fancy-work department there were some pretty things, and the exhibit of the taxidermist, who has a store for the sale of his work, at Sanford, was excellent. His birds and animals are very lifelike and very different from the stuffed creatures we usually see.



## LETTER XI.

"DO PEOPLE REALLY LOSE ALL ENERGY AND GROW TOO LAZY EVEN TO FISH?"

THAT the climate of Florida is to any unusual degree enervating is, I think, a mistaken notion—at least, I have observed no remarkable instances of loss of energy.

Our young men are just as ready for work, and just as ready for sport, as they are elsewhere. They show no special want of activity in store, shop, office, or field; while the energy with which they manage parties, picnics, and fishing excursions, is evidence that the soft South winds are not depressing to the spirits of youth. I heard one young man say he had lost but a half day in eight years. He is a college-bred man from a Southern State, and before coming here was unaccustomed to manual labor; but has worked persistently out-of-doors in field and grove, and has made for himself a reputation for integrity, good judgment, and industry.

There are others, old and young, from Northern as well as Southern States, who pursue here their various callings with all the energy that marked their characters at home. It seems wonderful how men, from even the most Northern States, can work out all day long in the sun, and almost, without exception, testify that they feel no unusual languor, while many such, who, from ill-health, had become, in their native air, incapable of work, find here new life and vigor, and feel themselves equal to a good day's work again. At the same time there are others whom laziness pursues. If a man is an idler in a cold climate where he must work, or freeze and starve, how can he expect this softer air to put an energy into him that he never knew before? Life here is too easy for that. A camp in the woods for shelter, chips and fagots for fire, a few sweet potatoes to be had for almost nothing, fish in abundance just for the taking, and easily exchangeable for food and clothing, and the question of daily living is solved. To a man not above such a life, energy is a superfluous quality.

There are other men here who are more than willing to work, and who fail from no lack of energy, but who are utterly unable to endure the sun. The same heat and dryness, tempered by cooling winds, that bring health and strength to others, prove unbearable to them; and if not blessed with ample means, or if, in the absence of money, they are not contented to live on fish and potatoes, they will be forced to leave the country and go back home.



"SHALL WE BRING OUR FURNITURE WITH US?"

Plain cottage furniture can be procured here, and as cheap as it could be bought by private purchasers and brought here; but those having a supply of household goods would do better to move them than to sell at a sacrifice and purchase again here.

There are, in Orlando, several house-furnishing stores, where cooking-stoves, sewing-machines, and all necessary household articles can be bought.

If you enjoy a feather-bed at home, there is no reason why you would not enjoy it here. Our nights are particularly cool, and if you can manage to get a night's rest on feathers anywhere you can do so here.

Blankets are necessary, as there is scarcely a night so warm that before morning, at farthest, you will not feel the need of covering. Even comforts are very acceptable at times. Indeed, the longer I live in Florida the more I am convinced that the requirements of comfortable living are about the same here as elsewhere, and that in planning houses, furniture, or clothing, very little difference need be made whether you are to live in Kentucky or Florida.

As to carpets, however, I am still undecided. I had intended when the sand should finally complete the destruction of the carpets we brought with us, to replace them with straw matting, but some of my friends who have tried it are not pleased with it. They say the sand cuts it, and sifts through it, and that a room can never be clean when covered with matting.

Carpets do harbor fleas, but so does the sand for that matter, and even the bare floor seems to offer no obstacle to their gymnastics. So I am altogether unable to give advice on this subject, though I think nicely-finished floors with rugs would be best for us.

Still, I would not advise any one to sell carpets at a sacrifice in preference to bringing them. It would be better for those who contemplate moving here and who are curious as to the best floor covering, to bring their carpets with them and help the rest of us, who are still in doubt, to solve the problem.

"CAN WE RENT A HOUSE IN ORLANDO?"

There has been recently a great Florida curiosity in Orlando—a house for rent.

Such opportunities are very rare, indeed. There are rooms and even houses that are rented, but such is the demand for them that often before one tenant leaves another has engaged the premises. It would be folly for one to come here counting on finding a vacant house. It is often hardly possible to rent part of a house or even rooms to live in; but still everybody that comes manages somehow to find some place to live till he can put up a box house, or at least a tent, and go to housekeeping.

"AT WHAT SEASON OF THE YEAR WOULD YOU ADVISE  
ME TO GO TO FLORIDA?"

There is, so far as my experience goes, no choice of season. It seems to be just as healthy here at one time as another. It is, in fact, no strange thing for visitors to choose the summer time to come; the vacation to preachers, teachers, and others during the heated term at the North, affording them an opportunity to come and test our climate at the time when it is supposed to be at its worst. They find invariably the heat not so great as at home, and to their surprise the breeze is almost constant and cooling, and the nights refreshing.

But the majority of settlers move here in fall or winter, and then seem specially to enjoy their escape from the rigor of a Northern winter.

I must, however, in all fairness state that many of our residents who are able to do so leave Florida during the summer, and a change at that season is generally thought to be beneficial, though I can not learn that such persons flee from any supposed or actual evils or discomforts to be feared in their new semi-tropical home, but that they only desire change for the sake of change, or else the longing for the old familiar faces and places of what was once called home takes them back again.

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LETTER XII.

HEALTH IN FLORIDA.

I ASKED the doctor the other day what I should say about the health of the country.

"The less you say about it at present the better," he answered.

It is true that there was at that time, the spring of 1882, an unprecedented amount of sickness in this locality. There was prevailing a slow fever—typho-malarial, the doctors called it. It seemed to present to the unprofessional eye the symptoms of typhoid; but the doctors said it was not typhoid—that the marks of typhoid were wholly wanting. There were but two fatal cases.

The disease was generally attributed to impure drinking water. The porous, sandy soil of this region offers a constant invitation to all impurities on the surface to come down below; and our wells are almost sure to become contaminated. The water in many of the wells in town and in the neighborhood has been subjected to examination, and almost invariably it has been found impure—in town

without exception, and in country places almost so—especially where the well is near the house.

Water from the lakes is purer, if precaution is taken to draw it where the water is deep. The only hope of security against the evil of impure water seems to be in building cement cisterns under ground, or tanks above ground for holding rain water.

#### “WHAT DISEASES AFFECT CHILDREN?”

In what I say about health and disease, I shall speak by authority of my own observation, or with the sanction of Dr. Shelby, one of our ablest and most prominent physicians, who has lived here and practiced his profession seven years.

At one time since I came here, children had whooping-cough quite generally. The disease was not particularly severe, and I think only one child died from its effects—a little girl with delicate lungs. Last winter measles was epidemic among children, and several little ones died from the sequelæ of the disease. The doctor says such a fever as that now prevailing often follows an epidemic of measles. He assures me there has never been here a case of scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid fever, small-pox, or any other zymotic disease. Pneumonia is almost unknown, except in cases of invalids who came here with pulmonary diseases.

Catarrhs run a rapid, easy course, and give little trouble.

I have been unable to hear of any hay fever in this region. I am informed that a patient afflicted with this disorder came here a few years ago and was speedily cured.

There is some malaria, though I believe regular chills and fever are unknown on our high lands.

A correspondent writes—and what he says is the substance of many letters I receive—“I am troubled with lung disease—hemorrhages. It is not consumption, at all; only a bronchial affection, or something of that sort; but my health grows worse. Would you advise me to sell a good little home here, in an old county, surrounded by all the comforts of life, and go to Florida, of course taking the delicate state of my health into consideration?”

That there are some marvelous cures effected here, no one who can trust human testimony can for a moment doubt.

Persons are living here to-day who tell me they came here in what seemed a hopeless condition—unable to work, some only able wearily to drag out each day's existence, some carried in beds—who are now, to all appearances, well. I know a number of such cases. The doctor says there are one hundred perhaps in this very neighborhood who have found here relief from lung and bronchial troubles, asthma, catarrh, neuralgia, and rheumatic affections, and all diseases that a dry atmosphere and even temperature would naturally benefit. But the trouble is people often come here too late.

The time to come is before disease destroys the vital organs. It is too late when the lungs are gone. There is no power in the air of Florida to restore an organ of the body after it is wasted away. Many are hurried here in the last hope, who have plainly but a few days or weeks to live. It is cruel in physicians to encourage or permit such patients to come here. They can only die, without the comforts of the home they have left, amid unfamiliar scenes and looking upon strangers' faces, or else make a hurried journey back to breathe out their exhausted lives among kindred and friends.

To all consumptives I would say, get a candid opinion from your physician. If your lungs are not too far gone—if enough remains to afford you breathing capacity—this climate may prolong your life. If your disease is only in its incipency, you may find here complete restoration to health.

But don't come here in the last stages of consumption, or any other disease, especially if you must leave behind you friends very dear and necessary to your happiness.

If you can come with friends to take care of you, and money to secure the best accommodations, it would be better in some cases to escape the trying winter or early spring months at the North, and thus, perhaps, lengthen life a season; but my wish for friends, who are hopelessly ill, would be to have them stay where the comforts of home and the ministrations of their loved ones could be theirs in their last days.

Still, I would not discourage any invalid for whom there is room for hope. It is possible that what may seem a hopeless case is not really so, and that a change of climate, with the facilities for living in the open air that Florida affords, might bring relief in many cases that seem desperate. It is a matter that the physician only can intelligently decide.

All should understand that consumption not only can progress here in its course, but that it can even originate here. Two persons long resident here, who came to this place in health, have died of this disease during the last few months. Still, the rate of deaths from this cause is remarkably small, and the rate of cures and benefits remarkably large; so that, altogether, the patient who has any chance for length of days at the North may reasonably hope, by coming to Florida, to add to "the days of the years of his life."

#### HEALTH AGAIN.

Some weeks ago I gave an account of the unfavorable state of health about Orlando. As this condition of things has wholly changed since that time, it is only fair for me now to give a new report.

The fever then prevailing has entirely disappeared. There is so little sickness that the doctors have almost nothing to do, and judging from our immunity from disease now in the very midst of sum-



mer, it seems reasonable to hope that we shall maintain hereafter our normal condition of health.

The mortality of the whole State of Florida by United States census report for 1880, was nine and one-fourth in one thousand, and in Orange county five and two-thirds.

The truth is, as a gentleman expressed it yesterday, "There is so little sickness ordinarily in Florida, that when any disease does appear it makes a great impression, and reports about it are exaggerated."

There were, after all, in the whole course of the malarial fever, but two deaths, so that the sickness was to be dreaded rather in view of the discomfort to the patient and the added labor it occasioned in the household, than any anxiety or fear from fatal results.

There had been an unusual amount of draining marshes and lowering lakes, extensive clearing and breaking up new land incident to the rapid settlement of the country, which, together with a severe drouth in the spring, undoubtedly, caused the sickness now so happily at an end.

Any other portion of the State which is subjected to the same marvelously rapid settlement may expect similarly temporary and incidental troubles.

The notion of Florida as a place where health abounds is so fixed in the minds of many that any statement serving to show that even in Florida we may be sick, is questioned, and even resented by them. This is especially the case with those who, never having been to Florida, are looking toward it as a sort of similitude of Paradise, where "there shall be neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." To dispel the illusion is robbing them. They are sick of sickness, and are determined that "the inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick.'"

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## LETTER XIII.

### MORE ABOUT HEALTH.

THE health question is one of peculiar interest and peculiar difficulty in Florida. Aside from the profound importance that attaches to such subjects everywhere, there is here the added fact that our State is becoming more and more a resort for invalids and others, who, not counting themselves as such, are of delicate constitution, and are seeking here refuge from the severities of Northern winters.

If we are to believe the statements of some writers, Florida is the native home of malaria, the land of perennial fevers, of torpid

livers, and jaundiced complexions—the very last State, indeed, in which any sane man, sick or well, would seek to find himself a home.

Among this class of writers, we naturally find our friend, Mr. Lee. He says:

“Florida is not healthy. No part of the State is free from malaria. Two-thirds of the State is under water, by actual survey. Yet we are told that the air is dry. The State is covered with swamps. The highest point of the peninsula, eighty miles from the coast, is not more than 160 feet above sea level. Physicians, however, are frequently employed by land agents to write up reports of the extreme healthfulness of the country. A man in Jacksonville has attained great notoriety for his ability in this line. There are no correct bills of mortality. Deaths constantly occur without a record. The natives and long-time residents exhibit few signs of health, and old people are few.”

A writer in the *New York Witness*, who does not give his name, but signs himself “A Presbyterian Pastor,” and who claims to have preached as an evangelist over the three leading railroads of northern and middle Florida, is equally emphatic, and still more definite in the counts which he makes against the salubrity of the State. He says:

“But go where you will in Florida, it is useless to deny that you will find malaria. Land agents will tell you that there is malaria all around, but just there it is quite healthy. Go to the next cross-roads, and you will find that you have left the malarious place behind you, and have come to a perfectly healthy place. Whether it is a delusion or the force of habit, I will not pretend to say; but men shaking with chills will declare that it is quite healthy there, but they contracted chills in some other place. I heard this while preaching in Tallahassee, Lake City, Gainesville, Cedar Key, Archer, Nicanopy, Mikesville, etc. When you go down to Orange Lake and the orange belt generally, or, still worse, to Indian and Ocklawaha rivers, you will find this condition much aggravated. There malaria can not be disguised. The Suwanee and Santa Fe rivers, which I know thoroughly, are equally malarious. The St. John’s is better in certain seasons, but every yard of it is malarious in August.

It would not be difficult to quote testimony at any length contradictory to these statements. Now, what is the real truth in this most important matter?

It may seem almost presumptuous in me to offer even any suggestions on a question so hotly disputed, for I have lived here only two years. I know from personal experience absolutely nothing of the health of any spot in Florida, except the particular hill—a very beautiful one, I think—in South Florida on which our home is placed; and yet I can see how at least some of these conflicting statements may be reconciled, without supposing that their authors

intentionally misrepresented facts, or that the whole State is the Upas valley, or the fabled Fountain of Youth.

In the first place, it will be well constantly to bear in mind what I have frequently mentioned—that Florida is a very large State, one of the largest in the older portion of the Union—an empire in itself. For any one to assert as absolutely true of the whole State, what is really true of perhaps not a hundredth part of it, is unjust. "Presbyterian Pastor" says you will find malaria everywhere, and at the same time admits that he has never been in South Florida.

It is true, as Mr. Lee says, that vital statistics in this State are very loosely kept, or not kept at all. The same may be said of all pioneer communities. Scientific accuracy in such subjects is only approximately attainable in even the oldest States. In the newly-settled ones opinion must, for a while at least, take the place of established fact. Still, there are men whose good judgment and opportunities for extended observation enable them to speak with authority on such matters, and whose carefully-considered opinions are quite as valuable as those of men who, from a half-dozen flying trips over some of the short railroads in the northern part of the State, assume to speak of an empire of which, probably, they have never seen a thousandth part, and which varies as much in different localities in regard to health as it does in soil, temperature, and elevation.

To assert, then, as Mr. Lee does, and as "Presbyterian Pastor" does, that Florida is not healthy, and no part of it is free from malaria, I consider a wide departure from that exactness of statement which we are entitled to expect from one bearing the honored name of "Lee," and which, in a "Presbyterian Pastor," we assume as a matter of course.

There are, undoubtedly, portions of the State (and of Orange county) which are unhealthy. First, what are called "hummocks," dense growths of almost tropical vegetation, where the rich, moist, shaded soil is filled with decaying vegetable matter, and which, the moment it is subjected to cultivation, is in the exact condition most favorable to the development of that mysterious poison, malaria. Second, there are extensive marshy regions lying along the margins of lakes and rivers, covered with a tall, coarse grass, called saw-grass, where the water stands a few inches deep during the rainy season, but which becomes partially dry at other times, when, if possible, malaria is even more than ever abundant. The poisonous emanations from these saw-grass marshes sometimes extend a long distance, and render residence near them almost certainly fatal to white men; but curiously enough, some of these prairies form exceptions to the general law, and it is said there are millions of acres in south Florida where all the usual conditions for the propagation of malaria seem to abound, but where, for some unexplained reason, if we are to trust the reports of "cattle men," who alone inhabit this region, malaria does not exist. Third, there are por-

tions of the State where something in the composition of the underlying rocks, and the water-supply influenced by these rocks is greatly prejudicial to health. A very intelligent gentleman, who has been long a resident of the State, and who has traveled over it extensively, remarked to me only a day or two since, that he wanted nothing better than a piece of soap to determine the healthfulness of any locality in the State. "For," said he, "wherever the rotten limestone is found the water is hard, and there it will be sickly. I don't care how high it is or how dry. It may look all right, and you can't see any reason for sickness, but people can not be well where that water is found."

As I have heard substantially the same thing before, I think there must be something in it, and that, probably, chemical analysis will reveal the presence of other elements than lime in the hard water of these unhealthy regions.

Fourth, there are low, flat regions, covered with saw-palmetto, lying along the banks of rivers where drainage is imperfect, and where more or less malaria is certain to be found. In more than one instance, towns have been built in such places, from their peculiarly advantageous locations; and the conflict between the laws of commerce and the laws of health goes on in these settlements as it does in other parts of the world, with the usual doubtful issue.

Are we then to conclude that Florida is altogether unhealthy, malarious, and no better than a stagnant marsh? Obviously not. The very spot from which I write I believe to be one of the healthiest in the world. At about the elevation Mr. Lee declares to be the highest in the State, one hundred and sixty feet above the level of the ocean, it is the water-shed of the northern and southern river systems of the State. A drop of water falling at the northern end of our house goes into the St. John's and the Atlantic; a drop from the southern eaves goes to Kissimmee, to Lake Okeechobee, and ultimately to the Mexican Gulf.

The "sweet south wind," if it does not "breathe o'er banks of violets, stealing and giving odor," is, nevertheless, here, as health-laden and as fresh and invigorating as sea and sun and balmy air and aromatic breath of pines can make it. Wealth and refinement are pouring in without thought of malaria. Capital is covering these beautiful hills with charming villas and orange groves. The little hamlet of Orlando, that two years since contained half a score of wretched, straggling buildings, with only two or three houses of even ordinary excellence, has grown into a thriving town of about 1,500 inhabitants.

One railroad has come to us and given us command of the St. John's; another is on its way that will put us in connection with the whole north country. If the progress continues at the same rate, ten years will not elapse before this will be one of the most densely-settled and wealthy, as it will be one of the most beautiful regions of the earth.



The total number of deaths within the year have been thirty-nine. Ten of these were persons who came here diseased, and whose deaths are in nowise chargeable to malarious influences. But even counting all the deaths, and the lowest estimate of population, 2,100, the average will be only eighteen to the thousand, or 1.8 per cent., a death-rate which would give us an average of fifty-five years of life. If we leave out the ten deaths, which it hardly seems ought to be counted, we have 1.33 per cent., an average lower, I believe, than is recorded for any other region in the world, and which would give sixty-six years as the average duration of life.

I am permitted to add the following written opinion of Dr. Shelby, who, as a medical authority, ranks second to none in this portion of the State:

"The truth is that any form of malarial fever is so scarce and so mild when it does appear, and so easily controlled, that it should not properly increase the risk in any scheme of life insurance. Congestive chills are absolutely unknown, and enlarged spleens (the true test of a malarial country), are not met with at all. A physician, looking for a true case of malarial anemia, or leucocythæmia, or other forms of malarial disease, would have to travel out of the country, certainly far from Orlando, to find them."

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## LETTER XIV.

### THE VALUE OF A GROVE.

MR. Lee says: "The owner of one of the finest groves on St. John's river spent \$30,000 before he began to succeed. It is, however, true that a healthy tree, in full bearing, ought to be worth \$30 a year to its owner.

"For the possession of two or three hundred such trees in a country where land can be bought for \$1.25 an acre, though dear at the price, it may be thought worth while to wait a few years, and to incur some discomfort, possibly much ill health. But is this in the reach of the small capitalist?

"I think it undoubtedly is, at least so far as the ill health and discomfort are concerned. The small capitalists can have just as much sickness and privation as the large capitalist, if these things are his object, but if it is orange trees he wants, we will consider the matter."

Mr. Lee's object seems to be to discourage emigration to Florida; but if, in an unguarded moment, he allows himself to place the income from an orange tree at \$30, he may as well abandon all hope of scaring men away. Even the fevers and reptiles of the

jungles of India would not deter men from going to a place where there is a prospect of such fortune; much less, then, the minor privations and discomforts that he sets in array before those contemplating moving to Florida. Thirty dollars a tree!

The wildest estimate I have ever heard, from the greatest enthusiast on the subject of orange-growing, has not placed the yield from a single tree at more than fifteen dollars. Ten will come nearer the mark from old-established groves; and five dollars is not an unsatisfactory result.

At \$30 a tree, and eighty trees to the acre, the crop from one acre would amount to \$2,400. Such a yield is unknown. The Spier grove, near Sanford, often called the Grim grove, the most famous grove, perhaps, in Florida, and the wonderful returns from which has done more than any other to attract the attention of the world to Florida, originally covered only four acres; but as the trees were found to be too close when they became of age, many of them were taken up and set out on three additional acres, so that the grove is now a seven-acre grove. The crop sells, year after year, for about \$6,000—sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less. So that, even from this grove, whose trees are about thirty years old, the returns are not over, and sometimes not quite, a thousand dollars an acre.

The owner of the largest grove in this neighborhood expects to spend over \$40,000 before he can look for any return from his investment, and he may even spend double that sum. He has set out 160 acres in orange trees, has built houses for the use of his manager and workmen, owns a number of teams, and, while he lives in Boston, has his young grove thoroughly attended to without regard to expense.

At Mr. Lee's estimate, we can easily count up for the owner of this grove a very encouraging interest on his investment; 12,800 trees at \$30 each give the modest sum of \$384,000. This income is trifling, to be sure, but I believe if I could be certain of securing it, I would buy land at "\$1.25 an acre, though dear at the price," and wait a few years, even though I should incur some discomfort; and I should be pretty confident, meanwhile, of having no worse health here than elsewhere.

I think Mr. Lee must have meant to say \$3 a tree when he made his estimate. Even this would secure an income of \$38,400 from the 160-acre grove, and about pay the estimated cost of bringing the grove into bearing with the first year's crop.

In reality, five hundred oranges to the tree is considered very good, taking a whole grove through. Some trees bear three or four times this number, year after year, but five hundred is a very fair average to count on. The fruit is sold here on the tree, the owner being at no expense for picking, at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cents apiece; allowing eighty trees to the acre—the usual number—this gives \$500.

It costs not less than \$500 an acre to bring a grove into bearing.

Eight hundred dollars is a safer estimate, and even this will not be sufficient unless the trees are well taken care of from the start, and never allowed to suffer from neglect.

The trees will need to be well watered and fertilized to insure quick growth. How fast a tree will grow, depends on how well it is fed, and the care that is taken of it. It must be remembered, too, that it will be some years after the trees begin bearing before they begin to pay. The great mistake made in counting the profits of orange-growing is in regard to the time necessary, not only to wait, but to work and spend money.

The question is, "Is this in the reach of the small capitalist?"

It depends on many things, often unduly considered, whether or not a person of small means, or without means, can succeed in gaining an orange grove.

He must have land; it ought to be near market. He must have trees; they ought to be four or five years old, well grown and thrifty, unless he can afford to wait for younger trees to grow, or still longer, to plant seeds and raise his own trees. His land must be well worked. It must be well fertilized. It ought to be well watered to insure quick growth. While the trees are growing the owner must live. Now, if he has money enough to live on, and enough to spend on his grove, there is no difficulty—only the beneficial discipline of patience. But if he has not money, he must work. If he can not, or will not work—and work hard, too—an orange grove is, to him, an impossibility. There is no use in counting on spending less than \$500 an acre in bringing a grove into bearing. If this money can not be forthcoming from some source, it is, as a general thing, useless to make an attempt at orange-growing.

Still there are exceptions to even this rule. There are numbers of small groves, paying largely, scattered all over the country—groves that have hardly cost their owners a cent—groves that are almost entirely the work of women, who, anxious to beautify their rude homes, and desiring fruit and shade for their children, planted seed, and, unaided, watered and tended the young trees, or, as one old lady expresses it, "nussed 'em and nussed 'em;" and long before their husbands realized the value of oranges, had brought into bearing some of the most valuable groves in the country.

The famous Spier grove, mentioned above, was the work of a woman.

## LETTER XV.

## OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

MY readers will remember that in my last letter to *Home and Farm* I called attention to the very singular communication of a certain Mr. Lee, published in the *New York Sun*, and widely copied into Northern journals, in which this State is painted in colors so gloomy and depressing that, were its statements generally credited, the tide of emigration now setting in so strongly towards Florida, would be interrupted at its source.

Of the author I, of course, know nothing. It is quite conceivable that a man generally truthful and reliable may, by some unfortunate combination of circumstances, become so prejudiced that he can see only the worst and most gloomy side of Florida life.

This State is developing with marvelous rapidity; but there are hundreds of men here who, through misrepresentation or want of judgment, or both combined, have been led to embark in foolish and unremunerative enterprises, and who have become so embittered by their failures that they are very incredulous about anybody's success.

If Mr. Lee has speculated the wrong way in prospective town lots or orange groves, I am sorry for him. It is natural that he should be sore about it, and blame Florida and everything and everybody in it. Still it is hardly fair that he should allow his impression of the whole State to be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," even if a dozen of the very largest Florida bubbles have burst in his hand; still less fair in him to proclaim through a widely-circulated journal that the few inches of misty atmosphere produced by such a catastrophe is really the only proper medium through which to view the whole State.

If we examine in detail the statements of Mr. Lee, we shall find, I fear, that a "hazy vision" is a very mild way of accounting for them. Take for example the following. He says: "When the inhabitants of an entire village leave Florida in a body, disheartened, disgusted, and reduced to poverty, as was the case not long ago at Archer, and when whole families are coming back every year broken down in health and impoverished in pocket, it is time to make the truth more widely known." On first reading this statement I naturally concluded there must be something in it. Certainly no one would venture to develop out of his inner consciousness a story so easily disproved if wholly false.

Still there was one puzzling circumstance. It had not been very long since I received some very excellent fruit trees from Messrs. Lipsie & Christie, whose nursery claims to be situated in this same "deserted village." I refrained, therefore, from shedding any superfluous tears over the wretched town until I could obtain further



advices. Accordingly, I addressed the postmaster at that place, and the following is his reply :

ARCHER, FLA., Dec. 6, 1882.

*Mrs. L. B. Robinson :* Yours received. In regard to the statement of Richard Lee about a whole settlement leaving here, I will say that it is entirely false. When I came here eleven years ago there were four stores; now there are eight, a carriage manufactory, and two cotton gins—one burned last winter, making three.

The business of the post-office has nearly doubled in the last two or three years. Large and flourishing orange groves have been planted, some of which are bearing and others soon will be. Many persons are engaged in planting vegetables for the Northern markets. As high as thirteen hundred crates have been shipped from here in one day.

Last night a division of the Sons of Temperance was established here, and we hope before many years to banish liquor from our fair State, by the aid of such organizations and the help of God. Very respectfully,  
W. C. ANDRUSS.

#### FLORIDA FROSTS.

Mr. Lee will not even allow the boasted perfections of our climate to be true. He says: "Florida is not tropical. If any tropical fruits can be grown there by dint of care, it does not pay to grow them. Except in the extreme south, where fevers are more acute and insects fill the air and soil, even the banana exceptionally remains green through the winter. Oranges can not safely be left on the trees, but should be gathered as soon as ripe to escape the effect of cold. Yet nowhere may the orange be grown to greater perfection, if a suitable locality be chosen, and a good orange grove is desirable property."

I believe the warmest friends of Florida have never claimed that the State is more than semi-tropical. Still, many strictly tropical fruits are grown out-of-doors in this latitude. Some of the tenderest of these require slight protection during perhaps five or six nights in the winter.

During the almost unprecedented cold of the winter of 1880-81, there was not a frozen orange in Orange county. The tender, young growth was not even touched. In some localities limes and lemons were slightly nipped, but not generally so, and the crop was by no means a failure. I saw oranges hanging on the trees through that winter, and in many cases the crop was not gathered till spring, it being the custom of some growers to leave their fruit on the trees until they can command the highest price for it.

At the Orange County Fair, in February, 1881, one of the severest winters known, there were displayed freshly-gathered oranges, lemons, limes, and strawberries.

Bananas are occasionally touched by light frosts that come almost every year; but this does not prevent them bearing in this locality, whatever it may be further north, as the fruit is grown here in the open air to perfection, and it is only rarely that it is so badly

injured as to prevent its bearing. In the severe winter of 1880-81, bananas were killed to the ground in some situations in this neighborhood; in others they were slightly injured, but even those apparently killed at that time have since revived and borne fruit. We have just finished eating a bunch of delicious fig bananas from a plant that was cut down to the ground that winter.

Guava bushes were also injured that season and their fruiting somewhat retarded; but by the following summer all effects of the cold were apparently over, and there was an abundant crop.

We do not claim exemption from frosts even here, but we do claim exemption from frosts damaging to the orange.

Mr. Holden, of this place, a description of whose grove I hope soon to present to the readers of *Home and Farm*, has trees thirty years old. If the veterans were ever injured by frost, they have hidden their scars well, for they show no signs of it. From one of his grand old trees he has sold more than \$50 worth of fruit in one year.

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## LETTER XVI.

### THE COST OF LAND.

ONE of the most perplexing questions that my correspondents almost invariably ask, is the price, per acre, of unimproved land. Another is the cost, per acre, of good bearing groves.

Land values are dependent on several considerations. Some land has an inherent value, and good orange land is now held at a good price, whatever its location, but the price demanded for it is greatly augmented when it is near a railroad or a rapidly-growing town. There is very little orange land to be had at original government rates. Almost all, if not quite all, has passed into possession of settlers or buyers who are not willing to sell for less than about double the first cost, however far off the land may be from what are to-day the best-settled parts of the country. Some of the colonization societies, and other companies that have acquired great tracts of land, are holding out great inducements to settlers and offering lands at \$2 an acre. There is, doubtless, much of this land that is good; there is much of it that is bad, and the only safe way for a purchaser to do is to have his land selected for him by a competent surveyor or to see it for himself. Buying Florida land at a distance is like buying a lottery-ticket—the blanks are certain, the prizes uncertain. Good orange lands, then, can be bought for \$2 an acre, \$5 an acre, \$10, \$15, \$20 an acre, remote from thriving towns and at a distance from railroads. Near Orlando, prices range

higher—much higher. I think, inside the corporation, no land can be bought at less than \$100; \$125 is the price of the cheapest land I know of, and no one would run the slightest risk in giving this price. Less than two years ago we bought for a friend a ten-acre tract of wild land for \$30 an acre, situated within the limits of the corporation, and about three-fourths of a mile from the court-house. This tract is not for sale, but the land adjoining it, situated in all respects as regards the town, quality of land, etc., exactly as this tract is, has been selling rapidly at \$210 for two-thirds-acre lots. The owner, a few days since, doubled his price for them, and now has withdrawn them from sale to await a rise in value. It is the same all about here. One tract that we hesitated a little too long last year to take at \$2,000, can not be bought to-day for \$10,000. The quality of these lands, in only a secondary way, affects their value, and although they are generally fine orange lands, they would, from their location, bring high prices were they almost worthless for growing fruit or vegetables.

There is no risk in paying the prevailing prices asked for *good orange* land in any part of South Florida. The only risk is in buying without being sure of the quality of the land, and of being imposed on as to price, and if the opinion of one of our shrewdest and most successful orange-growers is correct, there can be no risk in paying any price now asked for such land. He confidently believes that in ten years every acre of good orange land within five miles of Orlando will be worth \$1,000, before a stroke of work is put on it. If I were a non-resident, and could not be perfectly sure that a grove I should set out would be properly cared for, I would, after securing the best advice and assistance in the selection of land, prefer to put my means into wild lands, and trust to the improvements so rapidly developing this whole country, for an increase in the value of my purchase.

No one should come here in too great a hurry. Every one should give himself time to talk with all the land agents, become acquainted with many of all classes of settlers, hear all sides of the subject, and look about for himself. While there is some danger in being too slow—and I know of some fine bargains having been lost by reason of this—still there is more danger in being too fast, and if a man buys land ignorantly he has only himself to blame if he has to fish for his possessions in the bottom of a lake.

If a non-resident is obliged to depend on the judgment of some one here, in the purchase of wild land, I know of no one more reliable than our county-surveyor, Mr. J. Otto Fries. He is thoroughly acquainted with South Florida, and can be depended on.

#### THE COST OF BEARING GROVES.

Groves in full bearing—and to be accounted such the trees must average, at least, five hundred oranges—sell from \$1,000 to \$10,-

000 an acre, and are worth more than the money when the trees are in good condition and average one thousand oranges. For, at the lowest price the fruit is ever sold (one cent each), every tree is good for \$10, and every acre for \$600 or \$1,000, according to the number of trees.

One grove of six acres, right in town, beautifully situated on the lake, and just coming into bearing, is held at \$2,000 an acre. No purchaser has been found at this price, but the owner will not take less, and is sure he will get what he asks for it.

A grove of six acres, with four acres of woodland, making ten acres in all, situated three-fourths of a mile from the court-house, is held at \$5,000. The trees in this grove are from five to eight years old, most of them budded, about fifty of them bearing a few oranges.

These prices will give one an idea of the cost of such groves in this immediate locality, and it will be found that groves in good bearing, wherever they are, are not sold for a trifle, though it sometimes happens that a Cracker finds neighbors coming too close, and to be rid of the encroachment on his liberty, he is eager to sell his land, and the old grove about his cabin, planted and tended by his wife in the old days, when he thought orange-growing foolishness, and he offers his property at a price which seems exorbitant to him, but which is eagerly given by the lucky man on the lookout for a bargain.

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## LETTER XVII.

### THE FLORIDA MOSQUITO.

AT request of one of my numerous though unknown correspondents from New York, I copy the following from the *Toledo Blade*, and proceed to comment on its statements:

From time to time much has been written and published in regard to Florida, its golden oranges, its delightful climate, etc., and little or nothing said about its drawbacks. Any person who comes to Florida for a few months in winter is charmed by its nice climate, and well they may be, for it is delightful; but, to know the whole, one must stay through the summer, and then they will have a taste of innumerable mosquitoes, gnats, etc. Through the day one is very much annoyed by gnats, and at night by mosquitoes, *that will crawl through fine netting and nearly eat one up alive*. The days are very hot, although in the shade it is cool; but if one works for a living he can not be in the shade all the time. Northern men are *very much imposed upon by people in Florida*, especially "land sharks" who "button-hole" them as soon as they come and talk orange culture to them and show them an *exceptionally fine grove* as a sample of orange culture in Florida. The numerous *sickly groves* covered with "scale" are *passed by unnoticed*. In this way many persons from the North who have read *only the bright side* of Florida are led to invest and learn when too late their mis-



take in not looking around for themselves *before purchasing*. In 1881, the orange crop was large but this year it will be very light.—ZEBINA S. AKEY, Sorrento, Orange county, Florida.

I know nothing of Sorrento, and, therefore, can not endorse or deny any of these assertions in regard to that place; but I do know that here in Orlando and the region round about some things are different.

Right in town the inhabitants do not use mosquito bars at all at any time of the year. I have never seen a bar in any of the houses and the people tell me they have never used them. One of our residents says that when he moved here seven years ago he bought a full supply of bars for his house, as he had the common notion about Florida, viz: that it was the chosen and eternal battleground of mosquitoes; that his bars have never been unpacked to this day, and he strongly inclines to the opinion that of all the pests accredited to Florida the mosquito is the one least founded on fact.

It is true, in some places in the suburbs of the town and in certain localities in the surrounding country, bars are necessary at night during some months of the year, entire exemption from mosquitoes being altogether due to favorable location.

At our house, situated about three-quarters of a mile from the court-house in Orlando, we begin to object to the tuneful buglers about the first of May, and from that time till November "often and on," as an old lady I know says, we are careful to draw the bars about the beds before we think of lying down to pleasant dreams. Sometimes even during that time there are no mosquitoes. They go off visiting somewhere, I guess—to Sorrento likely; but they come back again, and always return just as we have begun to grow careless about putting down the bars.

Still even at their worst, in the most unfavorable locality in this neighborhood, and in the midst of summer, mosquitoes are no more abundant than in most Northern cities—not so bad as I have seen them in August in Louisville. They never trouble you during the day. They are not annoying in the evening. You can sit up and read or talk in perfect comfort, and when you retire any ordinary bar is sufficient to protect you in sleep.

Once for all—so far as this part of Florida is concerned, and it is the only part about which I can speak from knowledge, as I have never passed a summer night in any other—there are no mosquitoes to amount to anything. If you have been accustomed in your Northern home to listen to their nightly charivari you may expect not to miss altogether the familiar sound when you come here. If you have been accustomed to find refuge from their bills behind the shelter of a friendly bar, you may here confidently expect to escape paying for their music in the same effective way.

We are annoyed this summer for the first time by a little singing, persistent mosquito, that behaves very much like a gnat, and

except for his singing could easily be mistaken for one, for he does not bite but only flies into your eyes and ears in an exasperating manner.

As to gnats, I can not speak so favorably, though I suppose I can truly say I have never seen a gnat in Florida. But there is a little, noiseless, persistent, winged creature that takes the place very well; though it should not fairly be called a gnat, for it can not be defined as "a delicate, blood-sucking fly." It is delicate enough in all conscience—so little you can hardly see it—but it does not bite. It only flies and flies and keeps on flying. It is impossible to keep these flies—we call them gnats—out of your eyes. They get into your mouth, tickle your face, and tease you almost beyond endurance. They come in multitudes sometimes and are, I believe, the most vexatious pests we have. There is only one good thing about them and that is their visits are not very long and not very frequent. The first year they annoyed us very much, the next year very little, and this year they are almost unendurable when you are sitting still.

The days—that is, some days—are very hot in summer. If it were not for the breeze it would often be intolerable; but then the breeze is sure and certain. It can be counted on, and in the shade at any time even in summer time you can be comfortable. People that work for a living can not always choose in any climate whether they prefer to work in shade or sunshine. I fancy that the Northern farmer who often loses months from work in the winter or who is only kept busy shoveling paths in the snow or breaking holes in the frozen streams for his cattle to drink at, would, if he could, choose the hottest sunshine in preference to such weather. There is no perfect weather anywhere. If there were, somebody would find fault with it. I suppose, taking the year around, the Floridian has the best weather there is. For about eight months in the year he enjoys day after day with very few chances of complaining "How hot!" or "How cold!" Then the other four months the thermometer never rises extravagantly high and Northern men do work out the whole year and seem to thrive under it. Sunstroke is unknown. Almost every day in summer there is a rain, which gives refreshing coolness to the air and rest to the laborers—sometimes too much rest to suit an ambitious man who has field hands hired at \$1.25 a day.

The correspondent says "Northern men are very much imposed upon." I do not believe "land sharks" pick out Northern men especially to practice their tricks on. I believe that any man that goes anywhere and leaves his wits behind him will be apt to find somebody ready to take advantage of him. There are fine groves in Florida, and they are not exceptional. There are stunted and sickly groves, but these are exceptional. They belong frequently to non-residents, who have no just idea of the expense of caring for a grove, and fail to furnish sufficient means to work their trees and

fertilize them. An orange grove is too expensive a thing to be treated so. A man might as well throw his money into the fire as set out a grove and then leave it to care for itself. That such groves do exist is evidence of either the ignorance or inability of the owner. It is nothing against orange-growing. And with all the information spread about in regard to Florida, it seems strange that any men make the mistake of "not looking around before purchasing."

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## LETTER XVIII.

### FRUITS.

AT first, to the unpracticed eye, all trees of the citrus family look alike. Orange, lemon, citron, grape fruit, shaddock—it matters not what—there are the same deep green, glossy leaf and the same pleasant odor on pressure of the leaf. You look bewildered from sweet orange to sour, from sour to bitter, from bitter orange to lemon, from lemon to citron, and wonder if anybody really does know the difference before the fruit comes. You are almost inclined to believe that all these seemingly wise, experienced folks that lived in Florida before you came are mere pretenders to knowledge they do not possess. It seems impossible they should know what they are talking about when they go up so confidently to one tree and say, "How well this lemon is looking!" to another, "Ah, these Persian limes are fine things!" to another, "You haven't budded this sour orange!"

How can they tell! You wonder whether your young grove you are watching so hopefully will be sure to turn out all right, whether the trees they tell you are oranges are going to bear oranges, and the lemons, lemons. You think you will feel better about it when you see even one specimen of fruit on each tree. But there is nothing to do but to wait, and while you are waiting, insensibly almost as time goes on, you are learning; and after a while the time comes when you can nearly always tell a lemon when you see it; for now you begin plainly to see in the straggling, irregular habit of the tree, the lighter green foliage, and the purplish shoots of the new growth, the difference between the lemon and the orange. If you could only be sure your lemon wasn't a citron you would be all right. After a time you overcome this difficulty, and after a long time you learn by living with your trees to know their looks, and their habits, and their touch as you do your human friends so that you could hardly mistake them in the dark; and you may become so expert as to be able to name simply from the leaf

and tree not only every kind of citrus fruit, but also the very variety to which it is budded.

#### LEMONS.

Lemon culture is comparatively new amongst us, but it is increasing in favor. While almost all growers have been accustomed to give some space to this fruit, so that in any settled part of Florida it would be hard to find yourself "ten miles from a lemon," still it is only of late years that in this locality, at least, the fruit has been planted to any great extent.

During this time quite a number of lemon groves have been set out, and the returns already coming in from some of them are arguments in their favor more convincing than any amount of theory.

The advantages to be considered in lemon culture are these: The tree comes into bearing sooner than the orange, sometimes beginning to fruit as early as three years from the seed, and being in full bearing at five. The demand for lemons is universal, as they are a necessity of life rather than a luxury. They are very prolific, and in price they are nearly equal to the orange.

The disadvantages to be taken into consideration are these: The tree is more tender than the orange. A frost that would not touch the orange would injure the lemon crop, while a frost that would nip the young orange growth would be likely seriously to injure the lemon tree. The lemon, too, seems to be a greater sufferer from scale insect, and the tree at best is said not to be so long lived as the orange.

But after all, the great fact of its early bearing overbalances all these drawbacks, and more and more is the lemon destined to share the love and labor now bestowed on the orange. It is a more hopeful outlook to a poor man, the prospect of a harvest in three or four years which he may expect from well-grown budded lemon trees, than the prospect from an orange grove of a paying crop in six or eight years. He considers that if anything should happen to destroy his lemon grove, he could begin over again with more heart than if they were slow-growing orange trees cut down; for he could bring his lemons into bearing twice or thrice over while an orange grove would be maturing.

Florida lemons are very large, often thick skinned, and sometimes bitter, but the best kinds of the native fruit are not surpassed by any foreign variety in their fine acidity of flavor, and certainly not in size, for a good Florida lemon would make four ordinary lemons of commerce. Their great size indeed, has been against them as market fruit, for the merchants have complained that the buyers would give only a certain price for a lemon and that so far from their size being in their favor, it seems hopelessly against it, as consumers were suspicious of lemons as large as English water-melons. Having been imposed on, perhaps, by bitter and worthless kinds, they are slow to believe in anything really so fine as a good Florida lemon.



Besides this, not near so many large lemons as small ones can be packed in a box, and it has seemed to be the idea that a lemon is a lemon in value, whatever its size; therefore, if a little lemon would bring in market the same price as a large lemon, then of course little lemons were what was wanted. The large ones would not pay.

But this thing is changing. So many tourists and settlers from all over the country have found out for themselves about the matter, and have spread the truth abroad, that there is now more demand for the native fruit, and our lemons are beginning to be appreciated.

The only trouble is being able in market to distinguish between the good big Florida lemon and the bad big Florida lemon. If you buy the first you will have more lemonade out of one lemon than you ever squeezed out of four before. If you buy the last you will imagine you have sweetened your lemonade with quinine by mistake.

Of budded fruit, Belair Premium ranks first, after which the Sicily lemon is, I believe, generally preferred, though there are several sorts that have stood the test of experiment. One can not be too careful in making choice in this matter. In our grove we are having several hundred trees rebudded to the Belair and Sicily lemon now when they ought to be in full bearing. They were budded in the first place to a much-praised variety, but they have proved to be very ugly trees bearing very poor fruit.

On account of the shorter life of the lemon tree, many growers reject it as budding stock and prefer the orange above all things for this purpose. These growers plant orange seedlings altogether and by budding, turn their trees into whatever sort of fruit they want, whether it is orange, lemon, citron, or lime. I have seen a tree with five sorts growing from the single trunk.

There are growers, too, who prefer lemon stock for oranges. They say the trees come into bearing earlier and the fruit is larger and of finer flavor. But there are all sorts of practices in vogue, and one of the charms of Florida life is putting them to the proof and discovering for yourself that they are all good. The certainty of a fine result gives unusual zest to experiment.

It is very hard in any case to make a grievous blunder, and harder yet to think of anything in regard to orange and lemon-growing that somebody else has not tried before.

I was wondering once if a tree wouldn't grow upside down, and I picked up a paper giving an account of that very thing. The experimenter, however, did not advocate that mode of procedure for general adoption, but only as a matter of interest showing the curious adaptation of nature to new conditions of life. He was delighted to see the roots turn into branches and the branches into roots.

## LETTER XIX.

## ORANGES.

EVERYBODY knows what an orange is, but everybody does not know what a Florida orange is, for everything that answers to the shape of the earth in the old geographies, and that is sold as a Florida orange, is not such by any means. Persons that have once found out the true look and weight and taste of the article are not easily deceived, or willing afterwards to put up with other kinds.

So decided is the superiority of the Florida fruit over that brought from other regions that it readily brings a higher price in the market, and there seems to be a prospect of its displacing the foreign orange in our country, and being in demand across the ocean. One of our citizens sent a few boxes of oranges from Belair grove, at Sanford, to friends in England. The oranges were seedlings and Mediterranean Sweet. They arrived in good condition, and were pronounced "The best ever tasted. We shall never be able to enjoy another kind of orange. Some of them are quite brown, I fancy from the packing and getting moisture from the others, but they are far the best."

The rust on the orange is something not yet satisfactorily accounted for. Many theories are advanced in regard to the cause of it, but none are yet proven to be true.

To uneducated tastes, a bright yellow orange would seem the best; but there is something connected with the growth of the rusty coat that sweetens the fruit, and for anything but looks it is always chosen; and it would not be surprising if brown oranges should become the fashion. I have noticed that in New York they are advertising the fruit as "genuine, rusty, Florida oranges."

Many varieties of oranges are grown here, and scarcely any grower is satisfied with one or two kinds. Some prefer seedling fruit, and there is no orange more delicious than most of the Florida seedlings; but generally it is thought better to be sure of the kind of orange you are working and waiting for, and for this reason the trees are usually budded to preferred varieties, though one of the largest growers in this region makes a practice of budding from any seedling he comes across whose fruit is extraordinarily fine.

The favorite sorts of budded varieties are Jaffa, Magnum Bonum, Mediterranean Sweet, Homosassa, Naval, Sweet Seville, and the Mandarin or Tangerine orange. These varieties do not begin to furnish the sorts that very many growers cultivate, but are sufficient to afford great variety in fruit, both in quality and time of ripening.

So far as my experience goes, the Naval orange comes first into bearing. I have seen groves planted in several of the varieties I have mentioned, and the Naval showed blossoms two years before other kinds of the same age. I am not sure, though, that such is always the case. It is a matter well worth the consideration of those about to put out trees or to have them budded.

The Tangerine is a sweet, little orange, having a flavor of its own very much liked by most persons. The tree does not grow as large as other orange trees; it is beautifully shaped, the leaves are very small and of a deep green color, with a pleasant pungent taste wholly unlike the ordinary orange leaf. As the fruit brings the highest price in the market, and the trees being rather dwarfish in habit, can be planted closely, it is a very profitable sort of orange to cultivate.

Every one likes a few sour orange trees about, not only for the beautiful show of fruit which hangs on almost the year around, but also for the pleasant *orangeade* they furnish, which many learn to prefer to lemonade. This drink is thought to be a good tonic, and people first learn to drink it from thinking it will do them good. It is so suggestive of quinine that you can't help feeling there is merit in it. Orange wine is made from both sour and sweet fruit.

#### LIMES.

Limes are beginning to attract the attention of fruit growers in our neighborhood. The tree is said to be even more prolific than the lemon, comes into bearing quite as early, and the fruit is always a salable and profitable crop. The tree has a very thorny trunk and branches. The leaves are small, the flower white, the fruit a pale yellow like the lemon, with very smooth, thin, delicate skin, and a very slight protuberance at the end. It is of even more tender growth, however, than the lemon, a slight frost being sufficient to touch the young leaves.

For some reason not perfectly understood, the Florida lime has not done very well in our region, but there is a Persian lime that is believed to be more hardy, a regular bearer, and of great promise in every way. One great advantage is that the fruit ripens all the year, affording a constant crop. The fruit is beautiful, very much larger than the ordinary lime, and might readily pass for a small lemon of delicate appearance and fine flavor. A grove of seven acres of Tihitean limes has just been set out in Orlando.

#### GRAPE FRUIT.

Perhaps the least known of all the desirable fruits of the citrus family is the grape fruit. It owes its name not to any likeness to grapes, for it is a tree and not a vine; and the fruit is not small and in bunches, like the grape. It is in color like the lemon, in size and shape more like a monstrous orange. The name, then, is

due altogether to the vinous qualities of the juice, which makes one of the finest of native wines.

The tree is the most beautiful of all the family, and the fruit, with the exception of the citron, the most generous in size. It is the magnificence of fruit. There is something distinct in its flavor. It is not like the orange; it is not like the lemon. While possessing something of the savor of each, it has its own refreshing juiciness, with a slightly bitter flavor, very grateful to an educated taste.

The tree is preferred by many as budding stock for oranges, and it is largely grown in nurseries for that purpose; but it is making its way on the merits of its own fruit, and bids fair to rival the orange and lemon in popularity. There is something peculiarly refreshing in its taste to the sick, after a liking for it has been acquired.

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## LETTER XX.

### CITRON.

THERE are two kinds of citron grown in Florida, the sweet and the bitter. New-comers usually find this out by an expensive process, but it is an impressive and convincing one and leaves no doubt on the mind of the ambitious housekeeper who has attempted to preserve the fruit that there is a bitter variety, whatever other sort there may be.

The experimental method of preserving citron is this: The lady has recently settled in Florida, and no more attractive occupation presents itself to her imagination than that of preserving the wonderful tropical fruits she sees growing so bountifully all around her. In her mind's eye she can see the whole process through and through, and visions of the jars and boxes of preserves and glasses of jelly, with which she is going to astonish her Northern friends, fill her with impatient zeal. Some one, perhaps, sends her a present of fruit, among which are some enormous specimens of citron; or, it may be, the tree is in bearing on her own place, in which case she goes out and chooses fine, large specimens, not much less than watermelons in size, and of a beautiful, light lemon color. She has a general idea of how she wants it to look when it is preserved, and a very decided idea that she can make it look so. She cuts it in two, into quarters, and into eighths. She can hardly get it small enough to suit the remembrance of the citron she used to buy at home for plum-cake; but she concludes that citron is so good it will not matter how much there is of it. She scrapes out the pithy matter containing the seed, washes the rind which she is about to preserve, and tastes it. There is a slight, very slight,



flavor of bitterness which she thinks, probably, soaking in salt water will remove. After it has been duly soaked in salt, then freshened, she weighs her fruit and sugar, pound for pound, and proceeds hopefully to preserve it. It begins after a while to look so beautiful—so clear; it is time to taste it again. Whew! was there ever anything so bitter? She boils it in vain; the more she boils it the more bitter it seems to become. It is fit for nothing; nobody can eat it. She is more astonished at her failure than she can ever hope her Northern friends will be at any success of hers; and as to that wasted sugar—she is vexed with herself to find how often it recurs to her mind.

The only trouble about the whole matter was a mistake in the selection of the fruit. Somebody about this time will tell her so, and inform her that instead of the large citron she should have chosen a small one; instead of fruit of a light lemon color, one of the darkest orange shade. After a while she will be tempted to try again, and, with care in the selection of her fruit, and patience in experimenting in regard to salting, freshening, boiling, and drying, she will be rewarded with the most delicious preserve in the world.

Drying is accomplished by taking the fruit, after it becomes clear, out of the syrup, and exposing it to the sun or to the heat of a warm oven. This process is only necessary when the preserve is desired as it is found in market. The fruit is delicious and pretty when left in the syrup as an ordinary preserve, and in this way most housekeepers prepare it.

The preparation of citron for market will, undoubtedly, become one of the industries of the State, as there is no reason why we should continue to depend on foreign markets for this fruit when it grows so abundantly in our own country.

#### GUAVAS.

The guava is, of all our fruits, the hardest to describe, so as to give a true idea of it to one who has never seen it. I am going to attempt giving a description of it in order to satisfy the inquiries of many correspondents, but I shall do so with scarcely a hope that any one will be much wiser for the attempt, or any better able to recognize the fruit at sight.

The bush resembles, more than any Northern growth I can think of, the pawpaw. It bears fruit scantily for the greater part of the year, but August is the time of most abundant fruitage.

In color the fruit is light lemon. In shape it varies. It is sometimes pear-shaped; sometimes the shape of a symmetrical lemon, and sometimes nearly round. In size it varies from the size of a walnut to that of a large lemon. The skin is tender—so tender that the fruit is generally eaten without it being peeled and when the fruit is cooked the skin becomes quite as soft as the rest. It is

indeed quite as much a part of the edible fruit as the skin of a blackberry, and many persons would as soon think of peeling one as the other.

Under the outside lemon-colored skin, is to the thickness of a half-inch, more or less, what might be called the rind, as soft as the mellowest cantaloupe, and varying in color from a pure white through all shades of cream color, and sometimes being like rich, ripe strawberries in hue. Inside of this mellow rind, and seemingly a continuation of it, is the pulp filled with seeds, as abundant as the seeds of a tomato, and resembling them so that it would be difficult to distinguish a jar of canned guavas from a jar of canned tomatoes.

Its flavor is peculiar to itself. Scarcely any one likes it at first, but nearly everybody acquires a fondness for the fruit after a few trials. It comes nearer the mingled flavor of peaches and strawberries slightly spiced than anything else I can imagine. There is a variety called the strawberry guava, a very small, pinkish sort that very much resembles the strawberry when eaten with sugar and cream.

Guava jelly is already a source of profit in some parts of the State, and it seems a pity so much of this really valuable fruit should go to waste for lack of establishments where it could be canned, preserved, and made into a jelly.

The fruit is so perishable that it seems impossible to ship it to any great distance. In order, therefore, to save the crop, which is now almost a total loss, it will be necessary to build factories in many of the most accessible parts of the country, so that growers may find a ready market for their fruit.

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## LETTER XXI.

### A PLAN OF LIVING ON SMALL MEANS.

“WITH \$800 properly invested, could a young couple make a living by devoting their entire time to the little orchard and apiary, or would it be better to buy unimproved land with the same, and set out trees from time to time, as my salary would enable me?”

The correspondent who asks these questions wishes to seek Florida on account of his health, and he represents quite a large number of my correspondents in means, and the all-important matter of making a living here. I shall take great care in answering, for I would not like to be the means of inducing any one to come here with false hopes.

There is a great deal of work here, and men, able and willing to work, find no lack of employment; but no man can choose his work as he can in a large city. There is very little demand for teachers, clerks, or for men in any of the lighter employments, but always demand for mechanics and farm hands.

We will suppose that a man with \$800 and a wife comes here. It will cost him \$100 to get here. He can buy two acres of good orange land, in town, for \$250. He must clear and fence it, and build his house himself before and after working hours. A room with a shed-kitchen he can put up for \$50. Necessary furniture will probably cost \$50.

He must get work to do, of some kind. Suppose he is able to make only laborer's wages, \$1.25 cents a day, this gives him \$7.50 a week, and within this sum his wife must manage to keep house, or else she must, in some way, add to their income by her own work; for I do not see how any of the original \$800 can be spared for living expenses. Everything, so far as possible, must be invested for the sake of return; and "saving" is the watchword to success.

Twenty hens would be a good investment. About this number is all that can be profitably kept without special outlay for separate houses and runs. These fowls would cost about \$10. Now preparation must be made to set out the whole of the two acres in nursery trees.

Orange trees from six months to a year old, just started, ready for transplanting, can be bought for one cent each. Twenty thousand would be required for two acres—an outlay of \$200. He can hardly afford this, and possibly he might, by a lucky chance, find the trees a little cheaper. But there is still another way. He can buy oranges at a cent a piece; each orange can be made to produce twenty trees, by proper management of the seeds; so that an outlay of \$10 will supply him with trees. He must, if he raises from seed, take care to shade and water the seed-beds, and then, when the seedlings are ready to transplant, he must have his ground in good order and well fertilized. He will set out the whole of the two acres neatly, in rows about three feet apart, and the trees about two feet apart in the row. The chickens will help him to take care of the nursery. The soapsuds and refuse from the house will help to fertilize the ground. Vegetables for the table and the market can be raised between the rows. Every inch of the ground can be carefully kept. With a force-pump and hose, at a cost of \$50 or less, the whole could be watered, and there is no telling how fast the trees will grow under such management.

It is not well to fertilize nursery trees very heavily, I think, as they do not bear transplanting so well to poorer soil. But, with a moderate amount of fertilizing, the trees will grow astonishingly if they are supplied with water.

He has spent now \$520 for these enumerated possessions. He

will probably have been obliged to spend \$100 more, and has left only \$180. He had better keep that for emergencies, and keep on making his daily wages. Everything he can raise in his garden he can find ready market for in town. Every egg is worth two cents. All of these little things lessen the burden. Year by year the trees grow, flowers are gathered about the yard, a choice tree—date, palm, or cocoanut, or mango, or mammee, or jujube, or almond—stands here and there, for these things grow as naturally about our homes here as ailanthus trees at the North; and before the income begins, the pleasure and pride of home have taken possession of his soul.

When three years have passed, every alternate tree can be sold at twenty-five cents a tree. Five thousand dollars in hand will permit of some relaxation in labor, and of some outside investments. In another year every alternate tree can be sold at fifty cents—\$2,500 again. The value of the trees will not double every year; five-year-old trees will probably bring not more than fifty cents. He will, after selling the five-year-old trees, have sold \$6,250 worth of trees, and have left 2,500 trees. He will keep 160 of these standing in place for his permanent grove; the rest—2,340 trees—he can sell when he pleases during the next two years, at a dollar or more a tree. Five dollars is an ordinary price for large trees coming into bearing, so that he can reasonably count on one dollar. At the end of ten years he will have sold \$8,590 worth of trees; he will own a two-acre grove, the mere land of which will probably be worth \$2,000; he will own 180 trees, which he ought to make bear, by that time, 1,000 oranges each. (Trees of that age, in sight of my window, and raised by a woman, bear that number.) And with an income from his trees of \$1,800, and the return from his investments in wild lands that he has been shrewd enough to be making during these years, he can look back on privation and be ready to tell others how to do.

Now, while I do not think I have over-estimated the possibility of what may be done by a man of small means, I have a dread of misleading any too sanguine person. The course I have marked out will lead to fortune, but it involves such hard work, so much privation, so much determination, such strength of will, such good judgment, such incessant relays of self-denial, that it would be useless for most young couples to attempt it.

The man would have to forego all luxuries, the wife would have to bear her wifely burdens resolutely, and never complain for want of a new dress. Then, even with this, sickness might come, or other distresses overtake them. But such things must happen everywhere, and should not be counted specially against this enterprise. Wherever the young couple live, ten years will go by in some sort of way, and I doubt if many of them will be as well off at the end of that time as they would be by coming here and doing as I have proposed. Still I should hesitate to advise any one of small



means to come here unless he knew just what he could do, and how much he could bear. If those who are doing well at home would only make the self-denial they must make if they come here, and work as hard and save as hard—for it is all in the saving, after all—they need never leave home to seek fortune, for it is at the doors of the frugal and industrious. But there are many to whom the severities of a Northern climate are unendurable, and such persons may be able to endure under the influence of our gentler air, what would be impossible at home.

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## LETTER XXII.

“ARE THERE MANY NEGROES ABOUT ORLANDO?”

THERE are, comparatively speaking, few negroes in Orange county. While the construction of railroads necessarily brings in numbers of them, as hands during the progress of the work, only a few of them remain permanently; and it is often difficult to find laborers for the ordinary work about the groves and farms.

Still there are enough of them to make the sight of them no rarity; and considering their number and their common proclivities, it is wonderful that we have no reason to complain of their want of honesty. Whether it is because they are a better class of negroes than usual, or because they stand in mortal fear of the “Crackers,” as the native Floridians are called, I do not know; but certain it is we live in a remarkably honest and peaceful community.

Even our poultry houses do not suffer from their depredations. As for other property, it is equally safe. Nothing is ever stolen about our places. Tools or clothing, or any articles whatever that are, ordinarily, temptations to dishonesty, can be left out-of-doors without fear of being carried off. Doors may be left unlocked, or even wide open, for that matter, without danger from human intruder, whatever advantage wild animals might take of the carelessness.

During the whole time of my knowledge of Florida life, I have heard of no villainous outrages, no murderous attacks on life, no attempts even at burglary or highway robbery.

Quarrels there have been, of course, growing out of differences such as are liable to arise in any community and under any conditions of life; but such a thing as a man being knocked down wantonly, or for the purpose of robbery, is altogether unknown.

Ladies drive or ride about the country unattended by gentlemen, and this not only is absolute safety from molestation, but with the confidence of receiving due courtesy from all whom they may meet on the road.

When I first came here I brought with me the supply of terror about robbers, and fear of going out or being alone which usually besets women hailing from the State so long lorded over by the James brothers; but the soothing testimony of all the residents as to the absurdity of such fears, and, more than that, the long time I have been here without having any use or excuse for even the shadow of a scare, have so completely lulled to sleep my alarms that now I almost believe, should a robber meet you on the road, he would forget his cunning and, instead of demanding your money or your life, would only stop to ask what in your opinion it costs to bring on an orange grove.

Scarcely were the foregoing statements written when the startling news reached us of the murder and robbery of a man and his wife within a few miles of DeLand. I have no certain means of verifying the rumor, and I hope it is unfounded; for, if such things can happen in DeLand, I can see no reason why they may not happen in Orlando. At any rate, if we should not be robbed of lives and money, we are robbed already of our boasted sense of security.

And now straight on this horror comes the news of the robbery of a drug store at Maitland, a town so near us that we can almost fancy we hear the stealthy tread of the burglars as they come stealing on to pay us the next visit. Oh, me!

It's a great pity. Civilization is coming on us too fast. Next thing we know our chickens will be missing, for if the burglars have found us out, of course the petty thieves will.

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A year has passed since the preceding assertions were made. Only a few months have passed since it could no longer be said they were true. The former condition of security to life and property so phenomenal in and about Orlando has passed away. Our jail holds a number of prisoners charged with various crimes and attempts at crimes, from petty larceny up to the most villainous murders, and we can no longer assure our friends that they can come here and find perfect immunity from thief and shot-gun. There is hope, though, of law and order from the promptness and certainty with which criminals are condemned. We have here what I have heard called Jersey justice. It is nothing like Kentucky justice. Three of the murderers are already condemned to death. While one of the prisoners accused of murdering a lonely old man near Sanford was on trial, and the court was in session, there were heard out in the streets several pistol shots fired in quick succession. It proved to be two of our citizens popping away at each other. There were ten shots in all it is said, but nobody was hurt. Since that a white boy stabbed fatally a negro boy who was attacking him. There have been recently several attempts at house-breaking. All these sad changes it is my duty as a faithful writer to set forth.

## LETTER XXIII.

"IS FLORIDA SUBJECT TO CYCLONES, HARD WINDS, AND HAIL-STORMS."

WHATEVER may be the fate of Florida in the future as to those terrific, funnel-shaped clouds that have become the terror of many portions of the United States, this part of the State has to the present time escaped them altogether, so far as my most diligent inquiries have been able to discover.

During our residence of two years and a half we have had storms sufficiently severe to awaken the needless fears of the weak and nervous, but none of force enough to do any other damage than blow down a few rods of badly-constructed rail-fence and an occasional tree in the woods. Storms resulting in even such slight destruction as this have occurred only twice within my knowledge, though the wind sometimes sounds very threatening, to which effect the roar of the pines conduces not a little. The lightning is sometimes very close, and the thunder sounds as though it were rolling on the very roof of the house itself. Yet disaster from lightning stroke is very rare. There have been this summer some terrific thunder-storms. One of the hotels was struck and considerably damaged. Several persons were stunned, but none fatally injured. Trees in numerous instances have been struck, but so far there have been no strokes fatal to human life. Since my residence here I have heard of but one such instance, when a citizen of Maitland, six miles from us, was killed.

Although I have never witnessed a wind-storm in Florida of any special severity, the region is nevertheless subject to a kind of storm which, though not disastrous in its effects, must, it seems to me, serve to try the nerves of any who are at all timid or disposed to nervousness.

These storms last three or four days and nights continuously. The wind blows a steady gale. The rain comes down—no, not down, they tell me, but from every direction except above. It come from north, south, east, and west. It drives in under the eaves, through the window crevices, under the doors, and finds out every crack and flaw in the roof, siding, or floor. Houses accounted sufficiently tight for ordinary weather—even those through whose shingles you are not accustomed to discern the stars, and through whose sides you can not familiarly contemplate the rising moon—are drenched inside from one end to the other.

Such a storm occurred in the summer of 1880. It has been described to me by many persons who were witnesses of it, and it is said to be a *fac simile* of storms that occur every two years. It was just two years last August since the last one, but the expected storm did not come.

A neighbor who enjoyed the last storm was wishing for a repetition of it last summer. She said it was the grandest sight she ever beheld, that she stood at her window and saw the pine trees just flying through the air!

I confess I would rather see pine trees safe and fast in the ground or gracefully yielding to the woodman's axe. However, many pine trees couldn't have flown away at any rate; for the woods are full of them yet, and it costs just as much to make a clearing for an orange grove as it did before the storm.

Some persons tell me they were unable during the whole of that time—from Saturday till Wednesday, I think it was—to leave their houses. But one man I know who happened to be twenty miles away from home, who arose that night and set out on his homeward journey, and through the falling pines and all, made his way to his wife, because he knew she would be scared.

The only material damage done in this storm was the blowing down of an old stable and the killing of the horse kept there.

The wonder would be, on considering the slight structure of so many of the old houses, the most of them were not carried away; that they were not is good proof that the wind was only sound and fury signifying nothing.

We have had three little hail-storms this summer. The stones were about the size of a pea and did no damage.

In regard to storms then, the whole matter may be summed up in about this: That about every two years you may expect a three or four days' blow, such as I have described; that for the rest of the time you will have less rain, more fine weather, and about the same amount of lightning and wind that you have been accustomed to at home, unless, indeed, you come from a land of cyclones, when I can not promise you anything half so grand.

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## LETTER XXIV.

### QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

THE following is a very fair sample of many of the letters that reach me:

DEAR MADAM: I know you will be surprised when you get this letter from me, but seeing your letter in *Home and Farm*, in answer to Mr. Lee in regard to orange-raising, and being very anxious to know *all* about Florida, I thought I would address you to know *all* the *particulars* about Florida, and what are the pursuits that would be most likely to make a good living while they would grow a grove. What business is most overdone? My husband and I both have rather poor health, me especially; I have a cough and weak lungs. Now tell me what a woman could do best



and make the most at—that is, an industrious, Northern-born, Sucker woman, ambitious and energetic to the letter? How is it for help in-doors and out? Are there many colored people there? How is it for teaching school and music? What do they raise there beside oranges, that is, profitably? Does gardening pay? Would designing pay? Either butter or milk? What kind of vegetables grow there? What does land sell for near market? What are the school advantages and church? Also, I am quite a Baptist, as my father is a Baptist preacher, and I am the niece of ex-Governor ———, of Missouri. I will give you this as a recommendation. Does the yellow fever ever reach that far South? I have a young friend, a lady, that went to Florida for her health, and she took some of the fevers and never had her mind afterward, but is now in the insane asylum. She was such a sweet girl. Now please answer all my questions, and oblige your strange friend.

Yours truly,

Mrs. ———

“Business most overdone?” *Answer.*—The liquor business. But thanks to the efforts of our representative, Mr. Spier, we have a local-option law that will soon put a stop to this business. This law requires a petition signed by a majority of the voters in a precinct, the petition to be published two weeks before a license can be given to any liquor dealer. It is not believed that respectable men will desire to have their names published in such a cause, and we hope this local-option law will put an end to this business.

#### “WHAT CLASSES OF PEOPLE ARE SETTLING THE COUNTRY?”

Persons that are seeking Florida as a place of winter residence, or for permanent homes, may be classed under several heads; but the rough or “hoodlum” element finds no place under any of them.

*First.*—*Those who come in search of health.* These persons are usually possessed of some means, and many of them are from the wealthy classes, as it is not the poor who may choose what winds of heaven shall blow upon them. These health-seekers often finding here the treasure they desire, are lovers of the land, and we find among them the most ardent boosters of the perfections of Florida. They experience, as it were, a sense of gratitude to the very climate itself, and gladly remain to become identified with the country that has blessed them.

*Second.*—*Those that come seeking to improve their fortunes.* The spirit that leads such persons to come among us is rather one of energy and self-reliance than of adventure. There are no gold mines or diamond fields to dazzle the eyes with magical fortunes. Acquiring a fortune here means working and waiting, with very little of the element of sudden riches to beguile the imagination.

It is true that quick fortunes are sometimes made here by the rise in real estate. Perhaps, you have taken up a tract of government or State land, or you have bought it for a dollar or a dollar and a quarter an acre. It is in the wilderness; the deer, and the

bear, and the panther make their homes there. The alligator fearlessly suns himself on the banks of your lake. Presently the day comes when the iron rails grasp the ground! A depot rises on the spot! Hotels, stores, dwellings appear like magic, and you own a town!

But such is not the usual process of making a fortune. It is more like this: You open a store, or a law office, or a doctor's office, or a dental office, or a land agency, or a hotel, or a saw-mill, or some kind of shop; or else you find employment in some of these places or on a farm. At the same time you make yourself possessor of land, perhaps one hundred and sixty acres here, forty acres there, and elsewhere, too, if possible. On some place, in easy reach of your business house, you set out a grove, five, ten, twenty, forty acres or more, according to your means and ambition, and then you work at your trade or business, as the case may be, while you employ men to plow for you and hoe for you; and if you are very much in earnest, you will, after business hours and before them, too, go amongst your trees and put a bud into one tree, tie up a limb of another, rub off water-sprouts as you come across them, or you will burn out a stump, or set a trap for a salamander, or do any of the thousand waiting things that an owner's eye is quick to discern, and do them, too, with an interest and a love that no other property has the power to create within you.

The years go on; your trees grow. They were mere sticks or clubs when you set them out—bare sticks, three or four feet high, with only one green branch (the bud) to show any life.

You are surprised in one year to see that single branch a yard, perhaps two yards long. The second year your tree has a top. It looks something like a tree, but still it is a little thing, and you start, some day, with a thrill of joy to find on it a blossom; more than one—many blossoms. You conclude you have most remarkable trees, and that orange-growing is not so slow, after all.

But you don't have oranges to sell that year. You pick off all the blossoms that do not fall off, and wait.

The next year, blossoms again! And now blossoms may mean something. The trees are able to bear a few oranges; you can taste your own fruit. Nothing was ever quite so sweet! But your other business must go on yet; there are still no oranges to sell. One tree bears one orange, another four, another six, and this is about the limit the grove over.

You must wait another year. You must work on. You must make money somehow to pay for fertilizers, and to pay hands at \$1.25 per day for plowing and hoeing. Next year behold the blossoms! Count the fruit—but not before it is ripe.

A dozen oranges ripen on one tree, twenty on another, thirty on another, and may be fifty on some of them. An exceptional tree or two may ambitiously exert themselves to make a crop, but they will not amount to much yet. No oranges yet to sell!

Next year comes the beginning of harvest. Your grove is bearing a hundred oranges to the tree. If you have five hundred trees, you have 50,000 oranges, which, sold on the tree at \$12.50 a thousand, bring \$625. You will probably have spent on the place that year \$57 an acre, \$342 on six acres, leaving a balance of \$283.

After this you may safely count on doubling this amount for a few years. When your grove averages one thousand oranges to the tree, you have a convenient little income, and if you are tired of the store, or office, or mill, or shop, you may sell out to somebody that is starting at the point where you were six or seven years before.

This process of making a fortune is more likely to prove attractive to the long-headed, far-seeing, patient man of industry, than to such persons as usually crowd into new countries that open to rapid settlement. And such is the general character of this class of settlers.

We have representatives from almost all trades and professions who are all here with a purpose, and few are the idlers in our community.

Then, too, we have capitalists who regard the rapidly-improving country as a fine place for the investment of their funds. Surely, it would seem no other field offers such inducement. Land, bought five years ago at \$5 or \$10 an acre, sells now at \$100. Even a few months' time sometimes doubles the value of land near the fast-growing towns. If you hesitate a few weeks about taking a piece of land at \$100 an acre, it will be \$200 or \$250 by the time you make up your mind about it. Men believe that the whole country is destined to become a great succession of orange groves; and one of our most prominent citizens believes that in a few years every acre of even unimproved good orange land within five miles of town will be worth \$1,000.

*Third.*—We have among us those who, having seen the world, have chosen this spot as the one to be most desired. These have brought with them abundant means, and have no other object than to build for themselves beautiful homes in the land of their choice. Though even for this class of settlers orange-growing has a great attraction.

## LETTER XXV.

## "WHAT A WOMAN COULD DO."

A WOMAN can do here just what she can do elsewhere. Sew, teach, cook, wash, iron, keep store or boarders. I see no reason why a woman could not make a good land agent; why she could not, here and elsewhere, do whatever work is to be done that her strength and ability fit her for. I know that women can take care of orange groves. Some of the finest groves in the State bear witness to this. Women can bud trees; they can raise nursery trees; they can raise poultry. Eggs are never less than twenty-five cents a dozen here.

But I think the most encouraging outlook for women is bees and silk, and I hope soon to see these industries become part of every household economy.

The next question is, "How is it for help, in-doors and out?" Help is scarce, very scarce. No woman capable of cooking, washing, and ironing, need be afraid to come here. There is a constant demand for such workers, at good wages—\$10.00 or \$12.00 in private families, and from \$15.00 to \$20.00 a month in hotels and boarding-houses. There is also plenty of work out-of-doors. Farm laborers receive \$1.25 per day, without board.

There are a good many colored people in and about the towns—not many in the country, comparatively speaking.

"School and music?" There are children to teach, and there seem to be teachers enough to teach them. Still, when new teachers come, they find employment by some means. I believe there is no first-rate music teacher here, and I do not know that such a one could secure pupils enough to justify his coming. But one who wished to come here at any rate, for health, might find a few pupils to help eke out a scanty income.

"What do they raise besides oranges?" Lemons, limes, guavas, cassava, sugar, and cotton. This is not a farming country, in the Northern sense of the word, although our farmers raise, in a small way, most of the products of Northern farms.

"Does gardening pay?" Yes. No. It pays when you succeed in raising vegetables. It does not pay when you don't. There is a way to succeed, but the Northern gardener has his business to learn over again when he comes here. Drought and heat, and poor soil, are the things he has to combat. As soon as he learns how to overcome these difficulties, he can raise such cabbages as would have made Diocletian more than ever think a throne in exchange for such success a poor return indeed.

"Would dairying pay?" Nothing pays better when you can have the cows. Milk sells at sixty cents a gallon. Fresh butter



is a rare luxury. The scarcity of these articles is all owing to the poor milking qualities of the native cows. Some few cows introduced from the North have survived the period of acclimatization, and we hope some day to rejoice once more in milk and butter. In the meantime, we buy our milk condensed, and our butter, made strong from the benefits of travel. Our only hope in this regard is in Bermuda grass. It grows well on our sand, without fertilization, and there seems to be no difficulty in maintaining cows after we once have them acclimated.

"What kinds of vegetables?" All kinds grow here. Fertilizing, shade, and water are the secrets of success. Our people are introducing force-pumps and wind-mills for the purposes of irrigation.

"Price of land near market?" The price varies from \$5 to \$200 an acre for new land, altogether according to location. The cheapest good orange land within one mile of the Orlando court-house can not be bought for less than \$125 per acre.

"Schools and churches?" Public schools, lasting about five months, are usually followed by private schools, continued for the rest of the year, by the same teachers formerly employed in the public schools.

We have, in Orlando, six new churches, all built during the past year—Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist. Two of these churches belong to the colored people, who, I believe, have large congregations. I do not know anything about their ministers—how well or acceptably they fill their office—but the white churches are unusually favored in regard to the ability and eloquence of their pastors. We have men in our pulpits who would be men of note in any locality. This we owe, while still a rural community, to the attractions of our climate, which serve to draw hither, seeking health, rest, or relaxation, men who have been accustomed to minister to the cultured congregations of large cities.

"Yellow fever?" The yellow fever does not reach farther south than we are—that is, on the coast. There has never been a case of it in the interior of the State.

## LETTER XXVI.

“WHAT IS THE FEELING OF THE OLD SETTLERS TOWARD  
NORTHERN PEOPLE THAT COME FOR HOMES?”

THIS question seems absurd to us who have gathered here in peace from all parts of the old world and the new, and who are pursuing our search for health, wealth, and happiness, undisturbed by thought of political or sectional strife. It is only because the question is so often asked, and because the frequency of its occurrence implies a widespread belief in the notion that Northern men are not well received in Florida, that I think it worth while to try to disabuse the Northern mind of any such erroneous belief.

I even had a letter stating the writer's earnest desire to move to Florida on account of health, but that the risk of life was evidently so great from the enmity of the Southern people, that he preferred to take his chances in the killing winters at the North, rather than venture upon ground so full of peril.

Positively, I believe the question of the place of one's nativity never enters into the estimate in which he is held here; and as for violence, such a thing is never thought of. Our people are too busy, too well satisfied with their prospects, too happy to have new settlers coming in, to care whether their neighbors are from Massachusetts or South Carolina. Our immediate neighbors, all of whom are living in a charming state of friendliness, are from Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Georgia, Missouri, Virginia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Arkansas, New York, England, and Wales. I have never heard of a quarrel among any of them about politics or religion. There is no such feeling existing.

The usual questions of greeting, viz: “Where are you from? Do you like Florida?” seem to be the initiatory pass-words into the fraternity of Florida society, and it makes much less difference how you answer the first one than how you answer the last. You may say you are from Ohio, Maine, Massachusetts, or Kamtschatka, it will make no difference so you are all right on the second question, and respond heartily that you love Florida. And after we have passed this ordeal we cease to be Northern and Southern—we are all Floridians alike.

This feeling of cordiality, so evident among settlers from all parts of the country, extends to the churches, and the various denominations manifest towards each other an unusual degree of sympathy and helpfulness. There is the greatest harmony among

them, and an active interest is shown by all in building up churches of whatever sect they may be.

I understand that at DeLand when the amount subscribed at the Baptist church for finishing the building exceeded the sum necessary, the congregation immediately voted to give the surplus to the Methodists, who were also building a church at that place.

The only dissensions that have arisen among our people have grown invariably, I believe, out of mistakes or wrongs in regard to land. Persons, especially those at a distance, who have others to attend to their business for them, can not be too careful about having their settlements, titles, and the land itself all right. I know of several persons who have been imposed on, and who have lost so heavily as to cause them almost complete discouragement.

There is a man in jail in Orlando now on trial for his life. The difficulty, which ended in his killing his opponent, grew out of some trouble about land. But as both men were Southerners this need deter no Northern man from coming amongst us.

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## LETTER XXVII.

### ABOUT COWS.

A CORRESPONDENT from Fayette county, Alabama, asks what a cow, giving five and one-half gallons of milk a day, is worth in Florida?

Such a cow would be worth almost any sum a man would ask for her. No one in this part of the country has any such cows, and so they have no market price.

Stock-raising was once in Orange county, and is now in the more southern part of the State, an immense business, and a very profitable one. But the cattle are small and nearly wild, and give very little milk. It is quite probable that intelligent enterprise will ultimately supplant the native stock with better breeds. I think in the central part of the State something has been done in this way, but nothing, or next to nothing, in this part of it.

One of our neighbors brought, last year, from the North, several blooded cows—six, I think. Two of them died soon after their arrival, their owner thought, from the effects of the voyage, rather than from new climatic influences.

Another neighbor had some cows—native cattle, for the most part—selected for their milking qualities, but one of them, at least, a Northern cow. These cows furnish milk and butter in abundance the year around.

The best plan, undoubtedly, for us to secure the luxuries of the

dairy without great loss, would be to bring down calves from the North, as the young animals are said to bear transportation and change of climate better than old ones.

"HAS NOT SOME ONE IN FLORIDA WRITTEN A TREATISE  
'ON ORANGE CULTURE?'"

"Moore's Orange Culture" is one of the best works on the subject. Send fifty cents to Horace Drew, bookseller, Jacksonville, Florida.

"HOW IS ORLANDO SITUATED? HOW CAN WE GET THERE?"

Orlando is the county-seat of Orange county, situated in South Florida, on the peninsula. At that point the peninsula is about 110 miles across from gulf to ocean, though the average distance is about ninety miles. The traveler can easily find his own best route to Jacksonville, which point is now made accessible by through cars from all the principal cities in the country. At Jacksonville the trains make close connection with a line of steamers, which leave daily for all points up the St. John's. A journey of about twenty hours from Jacksonville will bring you to Sanford, an enterprising and fast growing city on the south bank of Lake Monroe, one of the chain of lakes that forms the St. John's river. At Sanford you take the South Florida railroad, and a ride of an hour and a half will bring you to Orlando. The trip is made from Louisville, Ky., to Orlando in three days and six hours.

## LETTER XXVIII.

### HOW TO BUY FLORIDA LAND.

A PLEASANT correspondent from Belfast, Marshall county, Tenn., asks for information on some points in regard to Florida, that I have not touched upon before, or else that have not come under his notice.

"What time of the year is best for a purchaser to examine lands so as not to be deceived as to their quality? How would the last of October, or the first of November do?"

No more delightful season could be found for roaming about the country than the months of October and November. The time of the year is not so important as the character of the season. It would be best to buy when it is wet, or at least not very dry; for



much land that, during a drouth, looks peculiarly rich, and that presents no suspicion of being low to one unacquainted with the character of the country, has perhaps been under water many a time. A stranger can not tell. There is really no safe way but to engage the services of an experienced agent or surveyor, unless you can remain here long enough before making a purchase to become an expert yourself.

I have before given the name of our county surveyor, J. Otto Fries, to the many inquirers in regard to a reliable person to select land. He is thoroughly competent, a man of good judgment, and honest. You can safely trust him, I believe.

"Please say something about numerous reptiles, alligators, etc. The towns and cities seem to be frequently located on rivers and lakes, and one might suppose such things would be troublesome, not to say dangerous."

I have seen, since I came to Florida—two and a half years ago—four ground rattlers, one water moccasin, one spreading adder, several gopher snakes, a number of black snakes, and one alligator. I have been near enough to be in any possible danger from only one of these reptiles. I came very near stepping on a ground rattlesnake, which was coiled up, ready for striking. A friend, who was walking with me, had stepped right over it, and I suppose had touched it with her dress and caused it to coil. We recoiled, and it soon glided away.

There has been but one instance of injury from snakes in this locality. A little son of one of our citizens was bitten by a ground rattler last summer. The bite did not prove fatal, but was of so serious a nature that the boy is not yet able to wear a shoe on the injured foot. One of our neighbors killed, in his grove, a rattlesnake that measured nine feet in length and had thirteen rattles.

This is the extent of my knowledge of snakes. I have forgotten to be afraid of them since I found how rarely any one is injured by them, and I think no one who thinks of coming here to make a home, need take into account any possibility of danger or annoyance from venomous reptiles. Accidents resulting from vicious or frightened horses, are here, as elsewhere, the most to be feared, and no one thinks of taking horses into account against a country.

"How should a club proceed whose object is to buy a tract of land, and by means of colonization, bring the land into cultivation and into market?"

It is possible, by means of small clubs or companies, for persons of small means to become land-owners in Florida; and if no mistake is made in the selection of land, and those in charge of the business are fair and honorable, I know of no better way for persons of either small or large means to secure what will surely be a good investment.

It is no unusual thing for such lands to increase five hundred

per cent. in a year or two, and that any good land (good orange land), bought at \$1.25 an acre, will fail to double in value speedily, is something not counted on.

Fifty dollars will buy forty acres of land. The usual fee of the surveyor or agent who selects the land is one-fourth of the land, or of the purchase-money. At this rate, \$50 will secure thirty acres, making the land alone cost \$1.66 $\frac{2}{3}$  an acre.

If it is desired to have a tract of 1,000 acres selected, a company should be formed by putting the shares at \$55 each—\$50 for the land and \$5 for all accidental expenses attendant on all such enterprises. Each member could take one or more of the twenty-five shares, and become the owner of one or more thirty-acre tracts.

The best way is to be sure of the ability and rectitude of the agent, and then leave the matter to his judgment, without any restrictions as to the locality; as it often happens that the tract available at a certain time is not a tract that just exactly answers the requirements of those who instruct the agent, and still is better than anything he can find in the prescribed locality.

The company plan is desirable on account of the probable settling up of the tract, but so far as securing good land is concerned, no one need wait for the formation of a company. There are forty, eighty, and one-hundred-and-sixty-acre tracts constantly revealing themselves to these surveyors, and that are at the command of those who desire them and are willing to trust their funds in unknown hands.

It will not do to wait in these matters. Everybody is on the watch for land. Sometimes the surveyors go out secretly, lest the direction of their tours of discovery may be revealed, and others may get the benefit of their knowledge. They do not blaze trees or put any land-marks when they find a tract unappropriated, but as cautiously and as speedily as possible, send off the money to secure the land, and even then they are sometimes too late.

If your company, then, or you as an individual, wish to buy land through an agent, the only certain way is to place the funds in the agent's hands and tell him to proceed to do his best for you. If you instruct your agent, as some who do not understand these matters do, that when he finds a first-rate forty or sixty-acre tract to write and let you know, you will stand no chance. The land will be gone before the letter could get to Jacksonville. The only way is to put your money in his hands, tell him what you want, and leave the rest to him.

A correspondent from Pass Christian, Miss., asks: "What is the highest temperature recorded at Orlando since you resided there? The lowest?"

The highest is 97°, the lowest 28°.

"Are shaddock and grape fruit the same?"

No. The shaddock is a coarser variety of the citron family,

and unfit to be eaten ; while the grape fruit, though slightly bitter, is full of juice and is peculiarly cooling and refreshing. It brings quite as good a price as the orange.

"Are bananas raised for market? How, and what is their produce?"

Bananas need a sheltered situation to insure fruit, as the fruit is killed by our frosts, and sometimes the plants are injured so as to prevent their fruiting for perhaps a year. They are not largely raised in this locality, though they may be profitably grown here, and will be, I have no doubt. We often have the fruit in perfection from plants standing without protection during a mild winter.

"What other fruits beside citrus family, bananas, and guava are planted?"

Grapes, figs, pomegranates, mangoes, mammees, jujube, olives, Japan plum, Japan persimmon, Punto peach, Le Conte pear, pineapples, almonds, cocoanuts, dates—indeed, it would be hard to tell what does not grow here to some extent. I have even heard of one or two apple trees that bear, though I have never seen them. Wild cherries grow finely, and it is possible we may succeed in grafting fine varieties that will do well here.

When our fruits come into bearing—for as yet most of the places here are new and the others were planted only to the orange and lemon in the early days—when our fruits, then, come into bearing, we shall have a choice among the delicacies the whole year around, and I think there will not be a time when we can not gather something for market or table use.

Some of these fruits need slight protection, so slight that it can hardly be called protection after all; but still this may preclude their being raised in sufficient quantity for shipment, but it is something to be able to offer the wealth of tropical trees to a friend, as it is to watch these rare fruits grow from cutting or seed.

A gentleman resident here has just now begun the business of going to the West Indies to bring over fruit trees from there. Our citizens have given him large orders and the business promises to be a success for him, and will undoubtedly put us in possession of many desirable fruits that we now have not.

"What vegetables can and can not be raised there?"

I know of no vegetables that can not be raised here; everything grows with proper attention. Shade and water and fertilizers are what are needed. Gardeners are experimenting so as to learn how best to supply these necessities without too great expense of labor and money, and are constantly making progress. Some of the results of gardening in this neighborhood are truly wonderful, and people are encouraged more and more to undertake the business when they know success of a single crop will more than pay for the loss of several. They can afford to experiment.

Some persons are trying the planting of castor beans in rows

beside their vegetables for shade, and claim to be successful. Many depend largely on turning in cow peas to enrich their land, and the introduction of windmills and force pumps promises a supply of water.

A great improvement has taken place during the last season in this locality in regard to vegetables. I think, doubtless, the Hon. Oscar Turner's goats could still find a living on tin cans about here if they were hungry for that sort of diet, but human beings are decidedly less dependent on the contents of tin cans than formerly. There are ten gardens now where there was one last year. Almost everybody is raising vegetables to some extent, and the market is very well supplied with most things in season. We have had new Irish potatoes and cabbages since January; tomatoes and snap beans we have in abundance. Squashes and cucumbers are to be found every day. Cabbages have been plentiful, but seem to have gone with oranges and lemons, so that it is difficult just now to get any of them. Watermelons and roasting ears have been plentiful since the first of May. Okra comes in occasionally, and cauliflower is still in market. One of our neighbors, Major Foster, has raised fine Irish potatoes two months and twelve days from planting at the rate of 160 bushels to the acre. Mr. W. E. Hudson, near Orlando, sold \$258 worth of potatoes from one acre planted in January. They were ready for market in seventy-two days from planting. The land is ordinary pine land, such as we all delight in about here. These facts show what can be done here in gardening, and as soon as our people awake to the necessity of feeding their crops as Northern market-gardeners do, we shall have some wonderful things to relate. One of our youngest young men has begun gardening on Peter Henderson's plan, and is succeeding well. He says two acres is all he can attend to, even here where there is no glass work or forcing to be done. He expects to keep his ground producing the whole year, and we shall know then how many crops can be raised in a Florida garden in one season of twelve months' duration.

#### AN ALLIGATOR.

We have had a novel occurrence lately, within half a mile of us, and, strange as it may sound, within the town limits. An alligator began his exploits by taking a hen from Judge Bryson's yard. The hens are accustomed to go down to the lake, on whose margin the Judge's place is situated, and the alligator to whom the lake belonged, took a second hen; after this a dog. Mrs. Bryson concluded, one evening, to interview the alligator, and went down to the place of rendezvous between him and the chickens. He was not there, but there was a dark place in the water that she thought she would punch. He was right there, and without a moment's waiting, he sprang out of the water in a leap for her head. He



missed her head, and his body began to descend, but so close was he that he grazed her clothing as he went down. She stood perfectly still, motionless with fear, but her screams brought ready assistance, and the alligator glided back into the lake. He has since been killed, and measured nine feet.

## LETTER XXIX.

### FERTILIZERS.

WE are apt to forget in the special prominence that is given to the subject of fertilizers in orange growing, that this matter is not confined to orange growing or to the sand hills of Florida. Liberal fertilizing is the secret of success in almost all localities. I have just finished reading Peter Henderson's "Gardening for Profit," and the amount that he considers it necessary to spend for labor and manure would make Floridians stare. They have never dreamed of feeding their land at this rate. He requires seven men and two two-horse teams for ten acres of garden, and puts on one hundred tons of stable manure or 2,000 pounds of bone dust, or 1,200 pounds of guano to the acre. He believes in a sort of rotation of fertilizers as well as of crops, and particularly impresses the fact that nothing receives any benefit from fertilizing when it is in a dormant state.

Orange groves are frequently managed in some such way as this. The owner, we will say, is a non-resident. By the time his land is paid for and his trees set out and fairly started, he finds he has spent more money than he had expected to spend. He is, of course, obliged to have some one attend to his grove. This is done here almost universally at twenty dollars an acre per annum. It is generally done in this way; the agent is to plow the grove four times a year and hoe around the trees every time the plowing is done. All extra work to be paid for as it is done. The result is usually this: the agent frequently puts off the plowing to a season more convenient for himself than for the trees; and as for the extra work it is not done at all. Water sprouts and weeds grow apace. Cattle break in and browse on the tender trees. Fertilizing is not attended to, and the trees soon look as if they were sinking down into China.

It is utterly useless to expect a grove to flourish without care and without fertilizing, and any non-resident who is not paying liberally for food for his trees, may guess pretty certainly that his trees are not growing.

The usual estimate of fertilizer necessary is from one to three

tons for 500 trees; one ton being sufficient for small trees. This fertilizer is applied once a year, usually in the spring, and costs about \$50 a ton, some of it a little more than this, some a little less. I am satisfied that much of this costly tree food applied in this way is lost, and that by a different method of application the same amount of fertilizer may be made to do twice or thrice the good. It is noticeable everywhere that the orange trees about the dwelling grow faster, bear earlier, and bear heavier crops than any others. These trees are so situated that they receive almost constantly small supplies of food and water, and trees treated so anywhere will thrive accordingly. We have one tree back of the kitchen; it is just exactly five years old from the seed; it was budded when one year old to the Sweet Seville; it bloomed this spring profusely and about twenty oranges have set on it. This tree is a marvel of greenness and measures eighteen and one-half inches above the base, and is about twelve feet high.

Reasoning from this, and other instances of this nature, I have concluded that the right way to fertilize orange trees is, to express it tersely, a little and often. I have the care of several groves that I am treating on this plan, and though the experiment is still of short duration, the little trees show their gratitude in so marked a manner that already a gentleman here has asked me to take charge of his large bearing grove in the same manner.

I have these trees hoed every month, and the ton of fertilizer which would ordinarily be applied to them at once in the spring, I have divided into eight parts and shall apply it monthly until the season in the fall when the trees are more nearly dormant than at any other time, when, perhaps, I shall omit it. At the plowing the first of June I shall have the groves planted in cow peas, the vines to remain and shield the ground during the summer and to be plowed to enrich the ground in September. A grove cared for in this way will cost more money than is ordinarily estimated to be necessary, but to secure large trees and an early crop, I know of no surer way.

#### "ON WHAT TERMS DO AGENTS CARE FOR GROVES FOR NON-RESIDENTS?"

The usual advertised price is \$20 an acre, after the grove is established. This contract is often misleading, and is frequently the occasion of dissatisfaction and disappointment; for, while it seems to cover the expense of bringing on the grove, it does nothing of the sort.

The owner may fondly believe he has nothing more to do than go on at home with his work, whatever it may be, or enjoy his leisure while his trees are growing here at this cheap rate; but in this money is all he spends, if he has not some pretty heavy bills

beyond \$20 an acre to pay, he may as well know, first as last, that his grove can not prosper.

The twenty-dollar-an-acre contract includes only plowing and hoeing, and it will not pay for more than that and allow a reasonable commission to the agent, if the work is properly done.

All extra work must be paid for extra. Fertilizers, applying fertilizers, sprouting, trimming, replanting trees, repairing fences, putting in new buds when old ones are broken off, tying up trees when necessary, and the whole oversight and care involved in the culture of the orange, are all items of additional expense to the owner.

The frequent, I might almost say usual, result is that the grove is plowed and hoed when the agent's team can most conveniently be put into the field, or his men be spared for the work, the whole being trusted to hired hands, and the agent in person scarcely ever setting foot in the grove. As for the extra work, if the agent's demands on this account are large, or frequent, the owner becomes alarmed, thinks he is being imposed on, or else concludes that all this talk about cultivating oranges is nonsense. Somebody has told him, or he has read somewhere, that the orange will grow in Florida, no matter how it is treated, and so he lets the fertilizing and the extra work go. He sends his \$20 an acre perhaps promptly, and feels that his whole duty to those trees is done. When he comes to see his grove, the agent has to bear the blame, and often not undeservedly, I think, for no such contract, without a perfect understanding as to other necessary demands, should be made.

A grove will thrive, to some degree, without plowing, better with too little than too much; but it will not even hold its own without food to supply its growth. Every tree needs individual and frequent attention. A lover of the business can scarcely go near a tree without seeing some needed work waiting for him.

I would rather agree with an agent to do the extra work and supply fertilizer for my grove at \$20 an acre, and let the plowing go undone, than to make the usual contract and not supplement with a liberal supply of fertilizer.

I talked with an agent to-day, who gave me his terms and management of groves. He charges \$20 an acre for three plowings and hoeings, and this includes applying fertilizers, trimming trees, and all work. For four plowings and hoeings his charge is \$30.

I shall give, in my next, the cost of the various kinds of necessary work in groves, and also the terms on which other agents take charge of groves, so that non-resident owners can satisfy themselves as to the real value of their agent's work and choose the plan they prefer.

## LETTER XXX.

## CARING FOR GROVES.

I WILL next make an estimate of the cost of work and fertilizers in established groves, so that any non-resident who owns property in this locality may readily be able for himself to arrive at a very fair conclusion as to what it is worth to care for a grove.

Plowing costs never less than \$2.00, and usually \$2.50 to \$3.00 an acre; a skilled hand, competent to trim and take charge of growing trees, at least \$2.00 a day; ordinary labor is never less than \$1.25 a day. Plowing an acre, then, four times a year, at the lowest price, is \$8.00. The hoeing depends on the size of the trees and the manner in which the hoeing is done. I heard one young man say, "Hoeing is nothing. I can hoe an acre of orange trees in a half hour." I have never employed him, but the best work I have been able to secure is three hours to the acre. In this case the trees are small, an inch to an inch and a half in diameter at the base, and the circle hoed around them rather more than two yards in diameter. The ground is in good condition, since the trees are hoed every month, and there are eighty trees to the acre.

At this rate, at 12½ cents an hour, and being hoed four times a year, an acre of young trees would cost \$1.40. A hundred trees a day is considered good work for large trees, and even an acre a day, when trees are very large, for the circle around each tree should increase as the trees grow, so that, after some years, there is very little, if anything, left for the plow to do.

An old grove then, would demand an outlay of \$5 an acre for one year's hoeing. The non-resident, therefore, can make his estimate as to what it ought to cost for hoeing, if he knows the size of his trees, the cost ranging from \$1.40 for the youngest to \$5 for the oldest. Of skilled labor, more or less is required, according to the condition of the trees. It is impossible to limit the outlay in this matter. It will be safe, however, to put it down to at least as much as the hoeing costs.

Of many fertilizers you can take your choice. Almost every brand has its advocates, but as there is a great difference in the price of various sorts, it is a matter of importance to discover any merits possessed by the cheaper kinds. There are several high-priced brands that are undoubtedly good, as the thrifty groves about here, on which these fertilizers are lavishly used, will testify, but I have been trying a cheaper sort with fine effect, and do not see that the result is at all behind that following the application of the more expensive kinds. "Stowe's Orange Tree Food" is the brand I have been using, and I am perfectly satisfied with



its effect. This fertilizer costs \$46 a ton. Four pounds to the tree is the usual amount applied to the younger trees in a year. Eighteen pounds is the largest amount I have known applied to the largest trees. Ten or twelve pounds is the usual amount for old trees. Of "Stowe's Orange Tree Food," at  $2\frac{3}{10}$  cents a pound, this would be, for the youngest trees,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  cents a tree; for the oldest,  $27\frac{6}{10}$  cents. It costs very nearly a cent a pound for applying fertilizers.

There are, besides the \$20-an-acre plan of tending groves, which I noticed in the last letter, several other methods in vogue here.

One agent charges a certain per cent. on all purchases of fertilizers, trees, etc., and on all labor he puts on the grove. For instance, if he puts a \$1.25 man in the field, he charges the owner \$1.50 for that man's work.

Another agent also charges the owner with the exact cost of labor and material, and makes a specific charge of \$12 an acre for his services in superintending the grove.

All of these ways of charging for the superintendence of groves offer opportunities not slow to be improved by an unscrupulous agent. I have seen groves plowed so slowly when the agent's fee depended on the time the man was in the field, that the necessary cost was doubled.

I have seen groves plowed so badly, the plows running right up to the very trees and tearing up the roots, that really more harm was done by the plowing than was counterbalanced by the hoeing and fertilizing. It would be safer in many instances for non-residents to order no plowing done, and spend the money saved in this way on frequent hoeing and fertilizing. A reasonable amount of plowing, judiciously done, is an advantage, but in the way it is frequently managed, it is decidedly detrimental to the growth of the trees. Very often, after such ruthless plowing, I have seen the trees, instead of looking revived as they should do, turn yellow and look as if they were thinking it was no use to struggle any longer for existence. A grove will thrive without plowing if it is well hoed about the trees and kept well fertilized, but no grove can prosper if it is badly plowed, however much is spent on it otherwise.

Advocates of clean culture are becoming rarer, and many cultivators are inclining to not more than one or two plowings a year, and these plowings most carefully done.

Some very successful orange growers claim that allowing the weeds and grasses to grow not only enriches the soil, but also shades it and keeps it from burning. One good is accomplished at any rate; the grove is prevented from having its tender roots, which lie like net-work just at the surface of the soil, mangled or torn out of the ground by careless plowing.

A good way to have plowing done, when you are not sure the work is in the hands of a skillful man, and the plan has its advan-

tages under all circumstances, is to have only half of the surface of the grove plowed at once, the furrows running straight between the rows of trees one way, and no effort being made to come near the trees or to plow the whole ground. This will leave part of the field in grass every time. The next plowing of course, will run across the other way and work the land left untouched before.

My advice to non-residents then is, be as sure as you possibly can be, that your agent is honest and reliable, then give orders for very little plowing, and a great deal of hoeing and fertilizing, and, as an extra precaution, and as often as it proves a source of gratification, come down when you can at unexpected times and look at your trees.

I do not wish to imply that dishonest or careless agents are in the majority—far from it. There are groves here, whose owners have never seen them, that are prospering as well as it is possible for groves to prosper under the circumstances; but there are other groves that verify the old maxim, "It is best to look after your own business."

While, therefore, I would caution non-residents to be vigilant in regard to their groves, I would not, for any consideration, implant in their minds that feeling of distrust and suspicion that would make it impossible for any upright agent to spend freely for them as he would for himself. This business, as every other, must be conducted on a basis of confidence to a certain extent, and after the agent is selected he should be allowed the largest liberty in his expenditures that his judgment approves, and not be hampered by niggardly allowances.

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## LETTER XXXI.

### RETURN TO FLORIDA.

ANY one at all skeptical as to the love those of us who have settled in Florida have for the country, should have seen the bright, eager faces of our party when, after having spent a delightful summer in our old Kentucky home, we left the L. & N. depot at Louisville, bound for Orlando.

Our party consisted of two families who have been residents of Florida for one and two years, and a third family on their way to Florida with the intention of making their home in Orlando, they having already bought a grove there. In all we were three married ladies, one young lady, three girls just verging on womanhood, six children and one servant.

On Tuesday, about one o'clock P. M., we left the depot, having

selected the time of our starting so as to make connection with the "De Bary" at Jacksonville, at that time the best boat on the line running up the St. John's.

We were obliged to start in a passenger coach and change in a few minutes at the Short Line Junction to a sleeping car, this new order of running having gone into effect that very day, I believe. Once on the sleeper, however, we found ourselves pleasantly situated. The conductor and porter were attentive and polite, and everything possible was done for our comfort; so much so, in fact, that the journey would have been monotonously pleasant had it not been for an incident that happened at Montgomery, which afforded us an experience so unique that I doubt whether such a thing ever occurred before. At any rate we managed to get out of a peculiar dilemma by making a joke of it, and enjoying as fun what, to a less merry party, might have been an occasion of grumbling and ill-nature.

We reached Montgomery about eight o'clock Wednesday morning.

"Twenty minutes for breakfast," was the announcement from a head thrust in momentarily at the door.

It was lucky for us we did not heed the summons, for I fear not even our placid tempers would have stood what our conductor and porter, and others, perhaps, of our fellow travelers had to endure in consequence of it.

We were well provided with lunch baskets, and our baskets were well provided with lunch; for grandmas and grandpas had filled them full with good things, some one having been thoughtful enough to put in a can of what one of the children called "condemned milk." So we simply asked the porter to bring us coffee in our new quart cups, which had been tied to our baskets for just this occasion, and we placed ourselves expectantly around the tables which the porter had thoughtfully set out for us, and waited to enjoy our breakfast at our leisure.

In a few minutes our train began moving. Some one said, "We are going," another said, "No, we are just switching off."

We forgot all about the train presently in the fun and nonsense the young folks kept up, and did not know we were really going and had actually left Montgomery in the dim distance, till the train conductor entered and laughingly informed us that our Pullman conductor and porter were left behind.

I suppose many others must have been left, too, for although our car had been quite full up to this time there were none on board now but our own party, and two strangers whom we had not noticed before. We did not realize at first what a predicament we were in; we thought of it only as the conductor was disposed to look at it—as a good joke, and were ready to laugh at his remarks about the discomfited conductor left behind.

"He'll be on hand another time, I reckon," said he. "Well,

never mind, ladies, I'll telegraph ahead for a conductor, but if we don't get one and a porter, you ladies will have to try your hand at managing a Pullman sleeper. I have nothing whatever to do with this car."

This was a new light to view it in. In the meantime, we had no coffee, and our cups were gone. We next discovered we had no water for washing, the drinking water was getting low and must be used economically, and the car was very dirty.

The girls, in great glee, at once adapted themselves to the situation and became forthwith "Teddy," "Tony," and "Chick," and tried what good porters they could be. They got the broom and swept out, gave out pillows to everybody to lounge on, set tables and took them away, and ransacked every nook and corner of the car to find out what it contained, and where things were kept. When night came they sought out the mysteries of the Pullman knobs and bed slats, and the hidden recesses where mattresses and pillows and blankets are stowed away. They found the clean linen, and by their liberal management we disposed ourselves in lower berths all over the car, just as we pleased, and did not have down over us a single one of those smothering upper berths.

The more sedate members of the party were not insensible to the dangers of our unprotected condition, and one volunteered to sit up and watch. Her lounge was an *extempore* affair constructed of a table-leaf laid across two seats, which two pillows served to make so comfortable that I am afraid our guard would have been caught napping at any time of night had anybody been awake to catch her.

The only thing that occurred to alarm even the most timid was the intrusion into our end of the car of one of the new passengers, who began playing with one of our little boys rather familiarly and boisterously, but a word from Mrs. ——— sent him back to his own place, and under the protection of so brave a captain we had nothing to fear.

At "Waycross," which we reached by seven o'clock on Thursday morning, a conductor from a train we met, learning of our destitute condition, voluntarily came to our help. He was exceedingly kind, and took on himself the double office of conductor and porter, for which we think the Pullman company ought to reward him handsomely. His regard, however, for our work, and his remarks thereon, were not altogether flattering, though perfectly good-natured and amusing.

"Where in the world did you get this mattress?" he asked.

"Don't know," said Teddy and Tony; "took them wherever we could find them."

He observed that it would take one week to put that car in order. There wasn't a slat, a mattress, a pillow, or anything else where it belonged. As for the curtains, he thought he should have to advertise for their mates.



We had only a short stop at "Waycross," where our car was switched off to wait for the train South, and we were speedily on our way to Jacksonville, which place we reached about ten o'clock on Thursday morning. We went directly to the boat, and after all our planning, were disappointed of the DeBary, which boat we saw on the docks being overhauled and beautified ready for the season. On the "Bird" we left the Jacksonville wharf at three o'clock that afternoon, and after being served with the poorest fare it was ever our bad fortune to have set before us on a boat, but having enjoyed the liveliest trip we ever made, we landed at Sanford at half-past two on Friday afternoon.

At 4:30 we took the South Florida train, and, after a tedious ride of two hours, we made the journey of twenty miles. The train was so heavily loaded with freight, as well as passengers, and the stoppages were necessarily so frequent and so long, that it seemed as if we should never reach home. At last, after a journey of just three days, five hours and a half, we could see through the darkness the lights of the town—lights so multiplied since we left a few months ago, that busy with questions as to "Whose new house is this?" "Whose is that?" we reached the depot and stepped out into what seemed a strange town, so rapidly had new buildings gone up.

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## LETTER XXXII.

### OUR NEW NAME.

THERE is a great deal of talk at present about the probable division of our State. The papers are constantly commenting on it, and it seems to be generally thought that some day, how soon or late I can not tell, this division will be made—division cutting off the east, middle, and south portions of the State from the north-western part.

I do not know anything of the merits of the case, and have no feeling in regard to the dismemberment of our body corporate, except in the matter of the name, which is being generally adopted as a settled fact by those who speak of Peninsular Florida—the name Sunland.

I do not want to live in Sunland. I love the name Florida. But if it enters into the terms of separation that the north-western part of the State is to retain the pretty name that has brought us so much blessing and we are to submit to a new christening, do not let us tacitly accept a name which brings into painful promi-

nence the idea of heat—an idea naturally repugnant, that many too readily associate with this country without any additional suggestions in the very name.

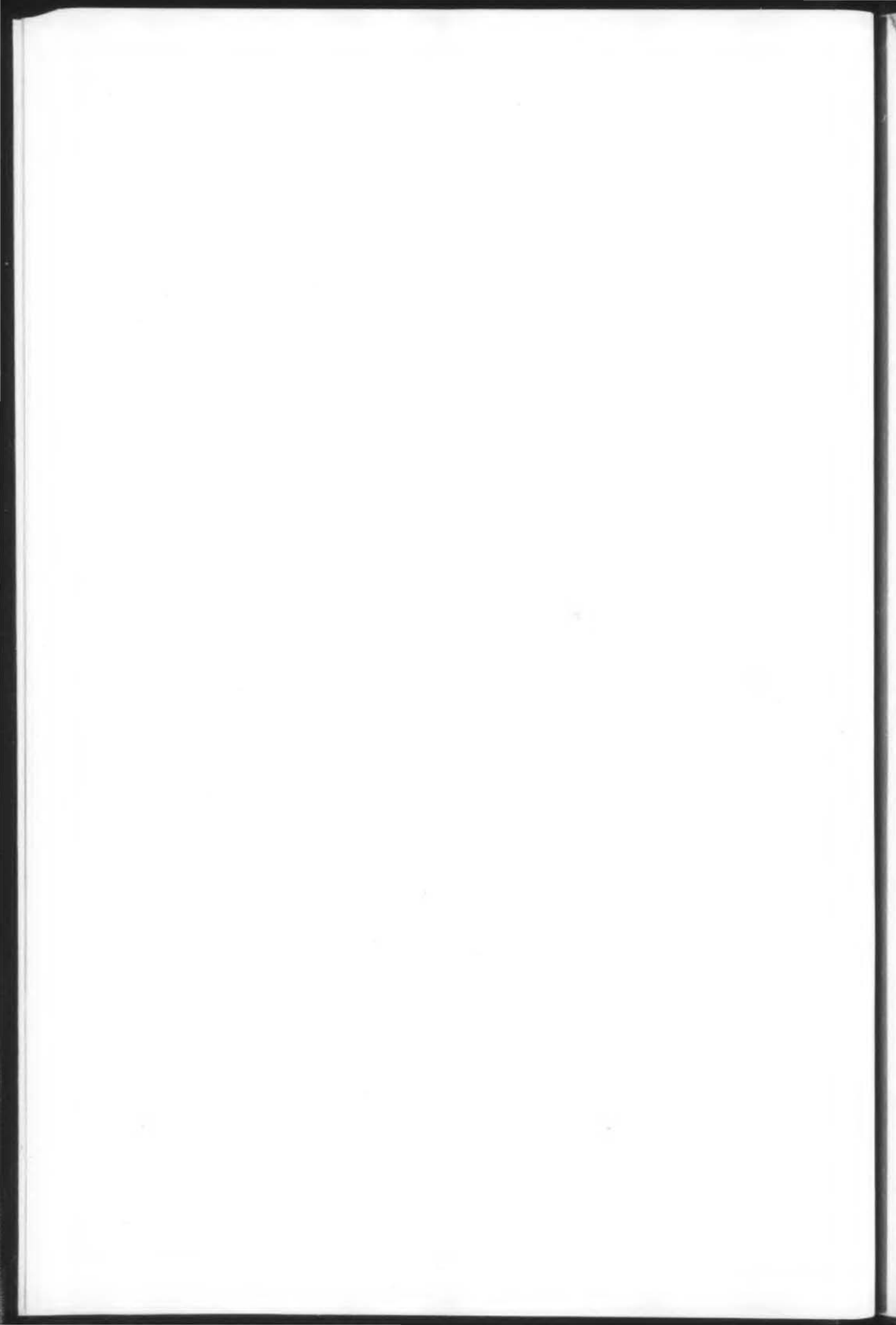
Sunland! of what use, then, to tell it abroad that our days are not too hot and our nights are delightfully cool? What use to speak of ocean breezes and grateful shade? No one could believe it.

"Where do you live?" the stranger would ask.

"In Sunland."

"Oh! how do you stand it?" would be his next expression, and thoughts of hissing serpents, insects, and crawling things, of fevers and fiery heat, would be the ineffaceable impression on his mind.

Let the new name be some pretty Indian name—easy to the tongue and musical, or let it be in our own language, something that will bring pleasant thoughts, something that speaks of the delights of our country, of the shade of trees, of cooling fruit, of the sweets of flowers, or something suggestive of the prosperity of the country, or perhaps of its peninsular formation.



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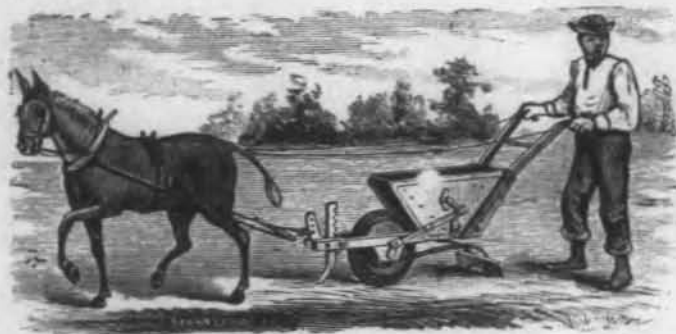
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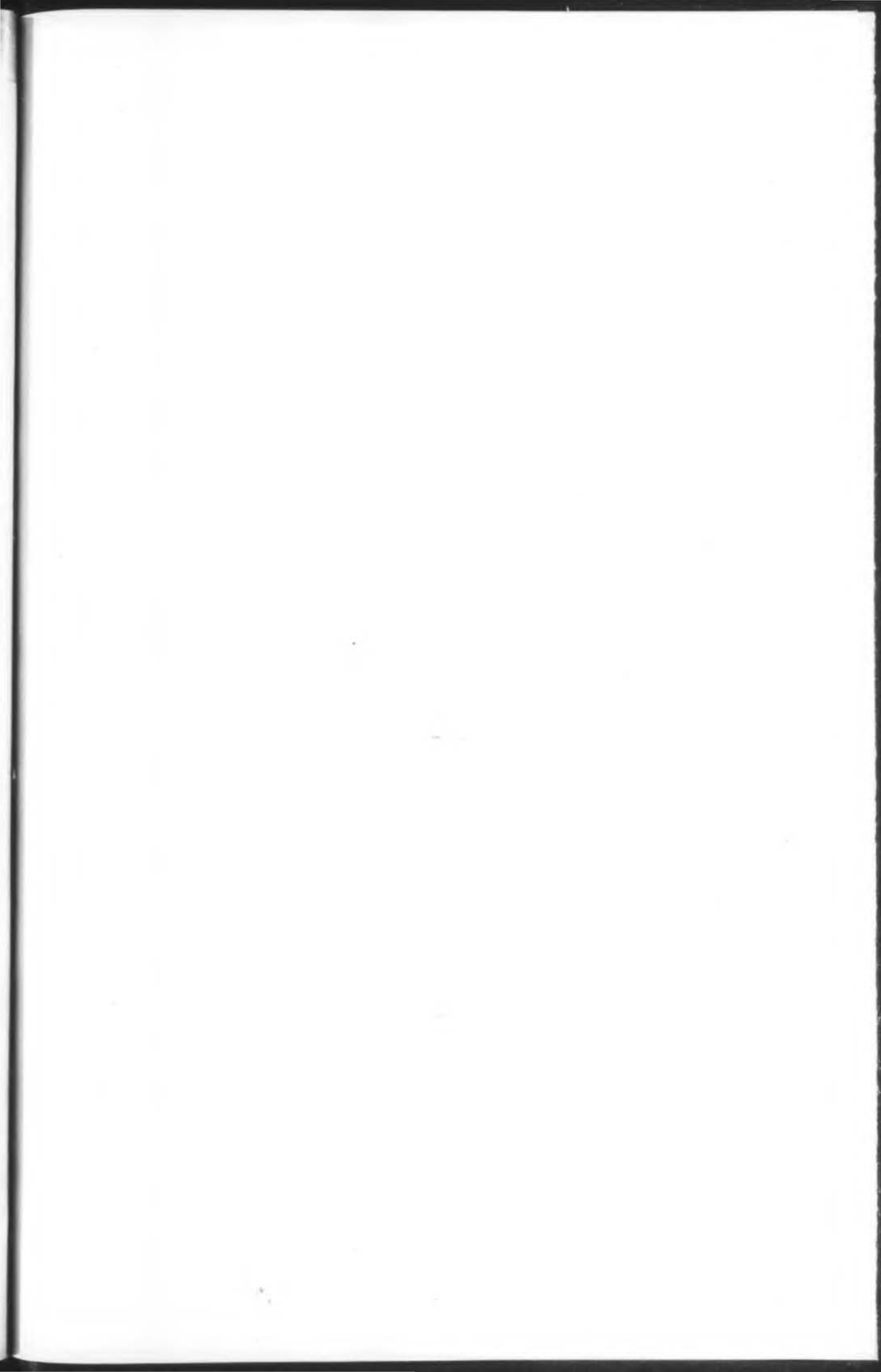
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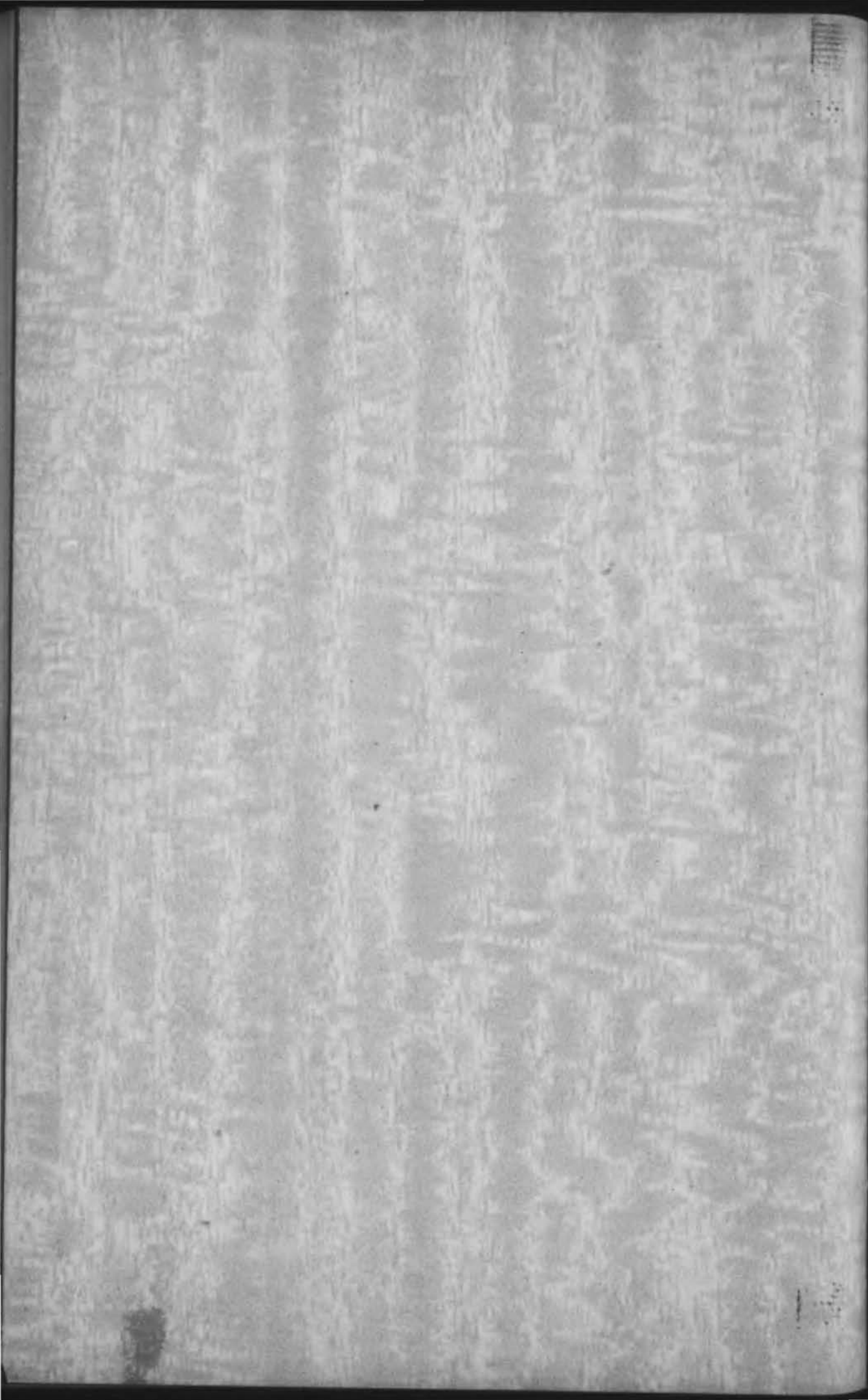
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